DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

14 JANUARY 2025

1 - 19th United Nations Forum on Forests Session:

GS II

International Issues

- **What were the main lessons learned from UNFF19?**

- India unveiled its updated National Forest Policy, which placed a strong emphasis on managing and preventing forest fires through technology advancements and advice.
- Approximately 100 million hectares of forest, or 3% of the world's total forest area, experience fire damage each year, according to UNFF.
- India suggests putting the Global Fire Management Hub into operation. This is an initiative by the FAO and UNEP to exchange expertise and knowledge on preventing forest fires.
- India recommends creating globally recognised guidelines for forest certification programmes, such as the Model Forests Act, to ensure consistent and ethical forest management practices around the globe.
- The event discussed the advancements made in accomplishing global forest goals, such as augmenting the economic, social, and environmental advantages of forests and obtaining funding, as well as the UN's strategic plan for forests (2017–2030).
- According to a UN assessment, market-driven methods of sequestering carbon are causing forests to become more like carbon sinks than living ecosystems with ecological and social values. This phenomenon is known as "Climatization" of forests.
- Malaysia pledged to maintain at least 50% of its land covered by trees, while Indonesia unveiled its Forest and Other Land Use Net Sink 2030 plan.

- **What UNFF19 Forest Management Initiatives Did India Stand Out?**

- India demonstrated how well it has managed forest fires with technology.
- Using ecological restoration techniques, online fire reporting via web portals, and real-time remote sensing fire monitoring are a few examples.
- 54.40% of India's woods are susceptible to sporadic fires, 7.49% to moderately regular fires, and 2.40% to high incidence levels, according to figures from the forest inventory.
- In terms of the net gain in average yearly forest area between 2010 and 2020, India comes in third place worldwide.
- India has shown its dedication to habitat preservation and species conservation by completing its 50-year Project Tiger and 30-year Project Elephant.
- India launched the 'Green Credit Programme' to promote climate action measures by offering incentives for planting trees and restoring degraded forest lands.
- With an emphasis on forest fire control and forest certification, India sponsored the nation-led Initiative under UNFF in 2023 at Dehradun. Attendees included representatives from 40 countries and 20 international organisations.

- **The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF): What is it?**

- The UNFF is a platform for intergovernmental policy that supports sustainable development, protection, and management of all kinds of forests.
- In 2000, the UN Economic and Social Council created UNFF.
- All people are members of the Forum.

- **Important Events Associated with Global Forests:**

- 1992: Agenda 21 and the "Forest Principles" are adopted by the UN Conference on Environment and Development.
- 1995: To carry out the Forest Principles from 1995 to 2000, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (1995) was founded.
- 2000: The UN Economic and Social Council establishes UNFF as a functioning commission.
- 2006: Four global forest objectives are agreed upon by UNFF.
- use sustainable forest management (SFM) to stop the global loss of forest cover;
- amplify the positive social, economic, and environmental effects of forests;
- enlarge the area of forests that are managed responsibly;
- Stop the decrease in the government's funding for SFM development
- Rally more funding to support the SFM's deployment.
- The UN Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (Forest Instrument) is adopted by UNFF in 2007.
- 2011 is "Forests for People," the International Year of Forests.

- *Source → The Hindu*

2 - Marital Disputes:

GS I

Indian Society

- **What are the Supreme Court's Observations?**

- In its decision to rule on a husband's appeal challenging the Punjab and Haryana High Court's decision to not drop the criminal charges against him, a panel of the Supreme Court made certain observations.
- Only "very genuine cases of cruelty and harassment" should warrant police action, according to the Supreme Court's cautionary advice.

- The ruling issues a warning on the arbitrary application of Indian Penal Code (IPC) Section 498A, which deals with domestic abuse.
- It takes certain components, such as criminal intimidation or causing harm beyond minor annoyances, to make a domestic violence case "complete."
- The court requests that Parliament reconsider Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, Sections 85 and 86, which impose a three-year maximum sentence of imprisonment (equivalent to Section 498A IPC).
- Divorce is known to be harmful to a child's development, particularly if it is rushed because of legal proceedings.
- According to the ruling, High Courts should carefully weigh all the facts and circumstances before selecting a plea to end criminal proceedings that result from marital disputes.
- Take note:
- The Madhya Pradesh High Court decided that an unnatural sexual relationship between a man and his wife will not be classified as "rape" under Section 377 of the IPC because the woman's permission is irrelevant in this situation because she is his married wife.
- The wife filed a false complaint against her husband, claiming he was having extramarital affairs, but the court dismissed it.
- Despite the fact that IPC does not include marital rape as an offence, the Kerala High Court decided in 2021 that it qualifies as cruelty committed by a husband against his wife and can serve as grounds for divorce.

- **What Other Options Are There for Handling Marital Conflicts?**

- Several processes under Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) can facilitate the quick settlement of marital conflicts:
- Mediation: When it comes to marital and family conflicts, a third party who is impartial helps couples communicate and work out a mutually acceptable resolution.
- In K. Srinivas Rao v. D. A. Deepa, the Supreme Court underlined the importance of mediation in cases involving married couples.
- Similar to mediation, conciliation involves the conciliator making suggestions for solutions and assisting the couple in coming to a decision.
- Arbitration: In this case, a private arbiter selected by both parties hears arguments and issues a legally-binding ruling regarding the disagreement.
- Because marriage involves emotions and societal taboos, among other things, many legal organisations offer Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as a more efficient means of administering justice.
- The Family Courts Act of 1984 created the Family Courts, which facilitate the quick resolution of conflicts pertaining to marriage, family matters, and related subjects by encouraging conciliation.
- The Gramme Nyayalayas Act of 2008 established Gramme Nyayalayas, which offers quick and simple access to marriage conflicts in India's rural areas.
- Family dispute resolution is also promoted by the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 and the Code of Civil Procedure of 1908.

- **The next steps:**

- In order to stop future abuse and fictitious cases, Parliament must to take into consideration reviewing Sections 85 and 86 of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita.
- Prioritising efforts at reconciliation over legal action can help limit police involvement in cases involving marital disagreements.
- By providing mediators and conciliators with the necessary training in handling delicate marital issues, ADR mechanisms must be strengthened.
- Local and uncontrolled ADR mechanisms, such Khap Panchayats (caste or community organisations), which function as quasi-judicial bodies and impose severe penalties based on long-standing conventions, even in delicate marital matters, need to be regulated and reformed.
- Public education regarding legal rights and alternatives for alternative dispute resolution (ADR) should be prioritised.
- Enough systems should be put in place to give couples experiencing marital dispute easy access to mental health services that support effective communication and conflict resolution techniques.

- The Supreme Court's observation centres on a nuanced approach to family conflicts. It urges couples to place a higher value on forgiveness and reconciliation than on prompt police intervention or criminal proceedings. The court recognises cases of true cruelty, but also seeks to prevent laws from being abused and to protect the welfare of both partners and children.

- *Source → The Hindu*

3 - Procedural and Ethical Errors in the Kerala Surgical Incident:

GS II

Health related issues

- **How Does Medical Ethics Inform Practice?**

- The four main ethical principles are fundamental to medical practice and frequently serve as a more powerful guide for behaviour than legal mandates. They are as follows:
- Autonomy: Obtaining appropriate informed consent and respecting the patient's right to make decisions regarding their care.
- The child's autonomy was violated because the parents' agreement was given for a finger procedure rather than a tongue surgery.
- Beneficence: Throughout the surgical procedure, acting in the patient's best interests in terms of health and wellbeing.
- Choosing the incorrect surgical treatment is not in the best interests or needs of the patient.

- A provisionally or fully certified medical practitioner shall not knowingly engage in an act of carelessness that could deprive the patient of essential medical care. Non-maleficence: Preventing injury to the patient.
- This guideline was obviously broken in this instance when the youngster had an unwarranted and damaging operation done on her tongue.
- Justice is the practice of treating every patient equally and fairly, without distinction on the basis of social class, race, nationality, or religion.
- This situation begs the question of whether the child was treated fairly, particularly in light of the standards that are anticipated in the medical field.
- Hippocratic Oath: This foundational recitation, which is recited during convocation ceremonies, binds newly graduated medical professionals to a code of ethics that includes the principles outlined in the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations 2002. It affirms a commitment to serving humanity, adhering to medical laws, respecting human life, prioritising patient welfare, maintaining confidentiality, expressing gratitude to educators, and fostering collegiality.
- This pledge guides doctors to preserve the noble customs and moral principles of the medical field, acting as a moral compass.
- Which moral precepts are in jeopardy in the Kerala surgical incident?
- Integrity and objectivity are fundamental principles that should be present in any service, yet they were absent from the doctor's conduct. This is especially true with healthcare services.
- attention to Public Service: The surgical error points to a breakdown in the basic attention to patient welfare.
- It is expected of physicians to uphold a high standard of medical practice and care; the surgical error is indicative of a breach of these obligations.
- Patient Confidentiality and Trust: A key element of the doctor-patient interaction is trust.
- These kinds of things have the potential to damage patient-physician trust as well as public confidence in the larger healthcare system.
- Accountability and Ethical Governance: The physician's conduct calls into question the governance framework of the hospital with regard to accountability.
- The episode emphasises the moral conundrums that the healthcare industry faces and the importance of strictly adhering to ethical standards.

- **The Way Ahead:**

- Structured Communication Protocols: You may cut down on errors and increase clarity by using techniques like the SBAR (Situation-Background-Assessment-Recommendation) protocol.
- A thorough description of the process, dangers, advantages, and available options must be provided, and comprehension must be confirmed, in order to ensure informed consent.
- Increasing Preoperative Verification: Implementing a "time-out" protocol that is required just before surgery to verify the patient's identity, the surgical site, and the intended procedure in front of the whole surgical team.
- Transparent Investigation Process: To rebuild public confidence in the healthcare system, it is important to make sure that incidents are transparently investigated and that the results are made public.

- Compensation: In addition to the immediate financial burden of medical costs, victims have the right to just compensation for the injury they have suffered. This compensation should include both the intangible and tangible losses incurred.
- Encouraging the Development of an Ethical Culture: Launch extensive training courses and seminars to teach medical staff members about moral standards and how to apply them to their work.
- Encourage discussions on ethical conundrums and best practices by fostering an environment of open communication and openness within healthcare organisations.
- Legal and Ethical Codes of Conduct: Promote the establishment of implicit legal codes of conduct that clearly define ethical standards for healthcare practitioners.
- Stress the value of moral standards that are upheld by society and that encourage honesty, kindness, and professionalism in the medical field.
- Encourage a cooperative, encouraging work atmosphere that places a high importance on professionalism, moral behaviour, and patient-centered treatment.

- *Source → The Hindu*

4 – Lion-tailed Macaques:

GS III

Environmental Conservation

- **What Qualities Make Lion-Tailed Macaques Unique?**

- **Important characteristics:**

- One of the smallest species of macaque, it weighs 2–10 kg, is 42–61 cm in length, and has a 25 cm tail with a prominent black tuft on the males.
- With the exception of its characteristic light-colored mane surrounding its head and chin, the lion-tailed macaque's black hair gives it the moniker "beard ape."
- Lion-tailed macaques, also referred to as "the wanderoo," are lonesome and bashful creatures that stick to their known territory in hierarchical groups of ten to twenty individuals.
- The group's dominant males alarm intruders entering their domain with loud, human-like "whoops."

- **Habitat:**

- There are only about 2,500 mature individuals of this primate left in the fragmented rainforests of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka in India's Western Ghats.

- One of the about 40 populations of lion-tailed macaques in the Western Ghats lives on the Valparai plateau, which is part of the Anamalai Tiger Reserve and features enormous tea and coffee estates scattered with forest patches.
- Primarily inhabiting the upper reaches of tropical moist evergreen forests, lion-tailed macaques graze on fruits and seeds, but they also eat leaves, buds, insects, and small vertebrates, which helps to maintain the health of their ecosystem.

- **Status of Conservation:**

- Endangered on the IUCN Red List
- CITES: First Appendix
- Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972

- **Dangers and Problems:**

- The main threat to Macaques is the loss of their rainforest habitat; up to 99% of their natural range has been lost as a result of widespread deforestation for agriculture, urbanisation, and lumber.
- Habitat degradation, increased human activity, a shortage of natural food, and inadequate waste management have all contributed to a shift in behaviour towards human settlements.

- **Countermeasures:**

- With the goal of reducing roadkill incidences and decreasing macaque dependence on human settlements, the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) has created canopy corridors and enforced restrictions to restrict feeding and provide safe guidance for macaques crossing highways.
- The lion-tailed macaque is one of the species for which the Tamil Nadu government has announced the creation of a conservation fund. The fund would have a budget of Rs. 50 crore.
- The Tamil Nadu Forest Department intends to carry out research in order to calculate the population of macaques and create a thorough conservation plan.

- *Source → The Hindu*