



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 10-07-2024

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Aphelion Point

Syllabus: GS-1: Physical Geography – Solar system.

Context:

- Planet Earth reached aphelion – when Earth was farthest from the sun – on July 5, 2024.

About Aphelion point:

- *Aphelion: The point in the orbit of a planet where it is farthest from the sun.*
- *For Earth, this typically occurs in early July each year.*

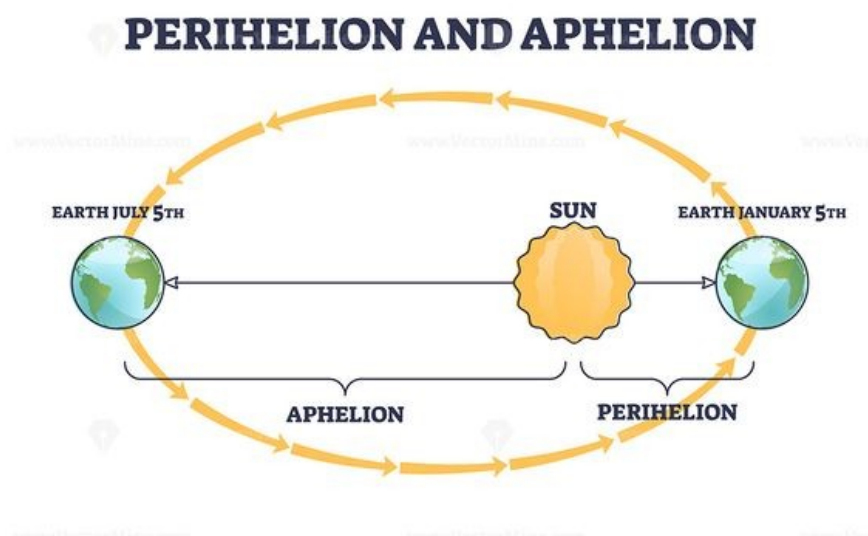
Key Points:

Orbital Mechanics:

- Earth follows an **elliptical orbit around the sun** with the sun at one of the two foci.
- The **opposite of aphelion is perihelion**, where Earth is closest to the sun, occurring in early January.

Distance:

- **At aphelion**, Earth is about 152.1 million kilometers (94.5 million miles) from the sun.
- **At perihelion**, Earth is about 147.1 million kilometers (91.4 million miles) from the sun.
- The difference is approximately 5 million kilometers (3.1 million miles).



Impact on Seasons:

- *Despite being farther from the sun at aphelion, the Northern Hemisphere experiences summer **due to the axial tilt of Earth.***
- *Seasons are determined by the axial tilt, **not the distance from the sun.***

Orbital Speed:

- *According to **Kepler's Second Law (Law of Equal Areas)**, Earth moves slower in its orbit at aphelion and **faster at perihelion.***
- *This **variance in speed compensates for the distance difference**, maintaining a roughly consistent amount of solar energy received over a year.*

Solar Energy and Climate:

- *The variation in distance and orbital speed slightly affects the solar energy Earth receives.*
- *The difference in solar energy is minimal and **does not significantly impact climate** or seasonal weather patterns.*

Historical and Astronomical Significance:

- *The terms aphelion and perihelion are derived from Greek, **where 'apo' means away and 'helios' means sun.***
- *Understanding these points is crucial for astronomers and helps in the **study of celestial mechanics and climate modeling.***

Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle

Syllabus: GS-1; Awards and Recognition

Context:

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded Russia's highest civilian honour, the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, during his visit to the country.**
- *The award for the PM was announced in 2019, for "exceptional services in promoting special & privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly relations between the Russian and Indian peoples."*

Introduction

- **Highest Civilian Honour:** *The Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle is Russia's highest civilian honour, awarded to distinguished individuals for exceptional contributions to Russia across various fields.*
- **Announcement:** *Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded this honour in 2019 for his role in strengthening the strategic partnership between Russia and India.*



History and Significance

- **Establishment:** *Founded by Tsar Peter the Great in 1698, the Order is named after Saint Andrew, considered the patron saint of Russia and Scotland.*
- **Saint Andrew:** *Known for spreading Christianity in Russia and other regions, Saint Andrew's symbol, the 'Saltire' (X-shaped cross), influences Scotland's flag.*
- **Symbolism:** *The Order's insignia includes a gilded double-headed eagle, symbolizing the Russian state, on a chain of 17 links. It features a badge, star, and light blue silk moire ribbon.*

Design and Components

- **Insignia Details:** *The badge and star of the Order may be adorned with swords for recipients recognized for combat achievements.*
- **Revival:** *After being abolished in 1918 following the Russian Revolution, the Order was reinstated in 1998 by an Executive Order of the President of Russia.*

Recognition and Recipients

- **Criteria:** *It honors heads of foreign states and prominent figures for outstanding service to Russia.*

- **Previous Recipients:** *Notable awardees include Mikhail Kalashnikov, Mikhail Gorbachev, Patriarch Krill, Xi Jinping, and Nursultan Nazarbayev.*

Conclusion

- **Significance:** *Beyond diplomatic recognition, the Order underscores historical and cultural ties between Russia and recipient countries.*
- **Modern Context:** *Continues to play a pivotal role in acknowledging diplomatic and cultural achievements in contemporary international relations.*

FATF

Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations; GS-3: Internal Security – Money laundering.

Context:

- *India achieves an 'outstanding outcome' in FATF mutual evaluation 2023-24*

What is FATF mutual evaluation?

- *The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) mutual evaluation is a **peer review process** in which member countries are assessed on their implementation of FATF's recommendations.*
- *These recommendations are aimed at **combating money laundering, terrorist financing** and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.*

More about news:

- *India performed exceptionally well in the **Mutual Evaluation** by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for 2023-24.*
- *The Mutual Evaluation Report of India was adopted at the **FATF plenary in Singapore from June 26 to June 28.***
- *India is now in the "**regular follow-up**" category, a status shared by only four other G-20 countries.*
- *This achievement highlights India's significant progress in **combating money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF).***

About FATF:

- **Established in 1989** during the G7 Summit in Paris.

- **Aims to combat money laundering**, terrorist financing, and other threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
- In 2001 its mandate expanded to include terrorism financing.

Membership:

- **Comprises 39 member jurisdictions** including major economies and regional groups.
- **Membership is voluntary** but carries significant influence due to global financial integration.
- India became a member of FATF in 2010.

Functions:

- **Sets international standards** and promotes effective implementation of legal, regulatory, and operational measures against financial crimes.
- **Conducts mutual evaluations** of member and non-member jurisdictions to assess compliance with **FATF standards** (FATF Recommendations).

FATF has 2 types of lists:

Black List:

- Countries known as **Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs)** are put on the blacklist.
- These countries **support terror funding and money laundering** activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.

Grey List:

- Countries that are **considered a safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering** are put on the FATF grey list.
- This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

Three countries **North Korea, Iran, and Myanmar** are currently in FATF's blacklist.

Consequences of being on the FATF blacklist:

- **No financial aid is given to them** by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Union (EU).
- They also face a number of **international economic and financial restrictions and sanctions**.

Impact and Importance:

- Influences global **financial policies and practices**.
- Non-compliance can lead to **reputational damage and economic sanctions**.

- *Enhances transparency and stability in **international financial transactions**.*

Recent Developments:

- *Expanded focus on **digital currencies, cybercrime, and proliferation financing**.*
- ***Emphasizes risk-based approach** and international cooperation in combating financial crimes.*

Digital Bharath Nidhi

Syllabus: GS-3: Infrastructure – Telecom sector.

Context:

- *Digital Bharat Nidhi would replace the erstwhile Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), which is a pool of funds generated from telecom companies.*

Draft Rules for Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN)

- **Date of Release:** *July 4*
- **Purpose:** *Increase telecom connectivity in rural areas*
- **Replacement:** *Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) to replace Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)*

Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)

- **Funding Source:** *5% Universal Service Levy on telecom operators' Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR)*
- **Objective:** *Fund expansion of telecom networks in remote and rural areas*

Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN)

- **Legislative Basis:** *Parts of the Telecom Act notified*
- **Scope:** *Wider than USOF*

Funding Process:

- *Contributions by telecom companies credited to Consolidated Fund of India (CFI)*
- *Funds periodically transferred from CFI to DBN*

Utilization of DBN Funds

Objectives:

- *Promote access to telecommunication services in underserved areas*
- *Fund R&D in telecommunication services, technologies, and products*
- *Support pilot projects, consultancy, and advisory services*
- *Introduce new telecommunication services and technologies*

Administration and Implementation

- **Administrator:** *Appointed by the Centre*
- **DBN Implementers:** *Selected through bidding or applications*
- **Funding Modalities:** *Full funding, partial funding, co-funding, market risk mitigation, risk capital*

Criteria for Funding:

- *Introduction of next-gen telecommunication technologies*
- *Improving affordability in underserved areas*
- *Promoting innovation, R&D, and commercialization of indigenous technologies*
- *Development of standards and regulatory sandboxes*
- *Encouraging telecom sector startups*

Requirements for DBN Implementers

- **Network Sharing:** *Open and non-discriminatory basis, as per administrator's instructions*

High seas treaty

Syllabus: GS-3: Environmental Conservation – Treaties.

Context:

- *India to ratify High Seas Treaty: What is the agreement — and its significance?*

High Seas Treaty: Overview

Introduction

- **Objective:** *Maintain ecological health of oceans, reduce pollution, and conserve marine biodiversity.*
- **Formal Name:** *Agreement on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).*

- **Significance:** *Comparable to the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.*

Current Status:

- *91 countries have signed.*
- *8 countries have ratified.*
- *Scope: Applies to areas outside national jurisdictions (high seas or international waters).*

Key Features of the High Seas Treaty

High Seas Definition

- **Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs):** *Extend up to 200 nautical miles (370 km) from coastlines.*
- **High Seas:** *Areas beyond EEZs, covering about 64% of the total ocean area, considered global commons.*

Challenges in High Seas

- **Lack of Responsibility:** *High seas suffer from overexploitation, biodiversity loss, pollution, and ocean acidification.*
- **Pollution Statistics:** *Approximately 17 million tonnes of plastics dumped in 2021.*

Existing Legal Framework

UNCLOS (1982):

- *Defines rights and duties regarding ocean activities.*
- *Establishes principles for equitable access and conservation.*
- *Lacks specific implementation mechanisms.*

High Seas Treaty Objectives

Conservation and Protection of Marine Ecology:

- *Creation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).*
- *Regulation of activities and conservation efforts in MPAs.*

Fair and Equitable Sharing of Marine Genetic Resources:

- *Ensuring benefits from marine organisms are shared globally.*

Mandatory Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs):

- *Required for potentially polluting or damaging activities.*
- *EIAs must be made public.*

Capacity Building and Technology Transfer:

- *Aid to developing countries for conservation and sustainable use of marine resources.*

Implementation and Ratification

Requirement: *Treaty becomes international law 120 days after 60 countries ratify it.*

Ratification vs. Signing:

- *Signing: Agreement to abide by the treaty's provisions.*
- *Ratification: Legal commitment, often requiring legislative approval.*

Potential Impact

- **Global Commons:** *Ensures high seas remain a shared responsibility.*
- **Conservation Efforts:** *Enhances international cooperation for marine biodiversity protection.*
- **Sustainable Use:** *Balances exploitation with conservation to benefit all nations.*