



INDIA 4 IASTM

For success in a changing world

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.*

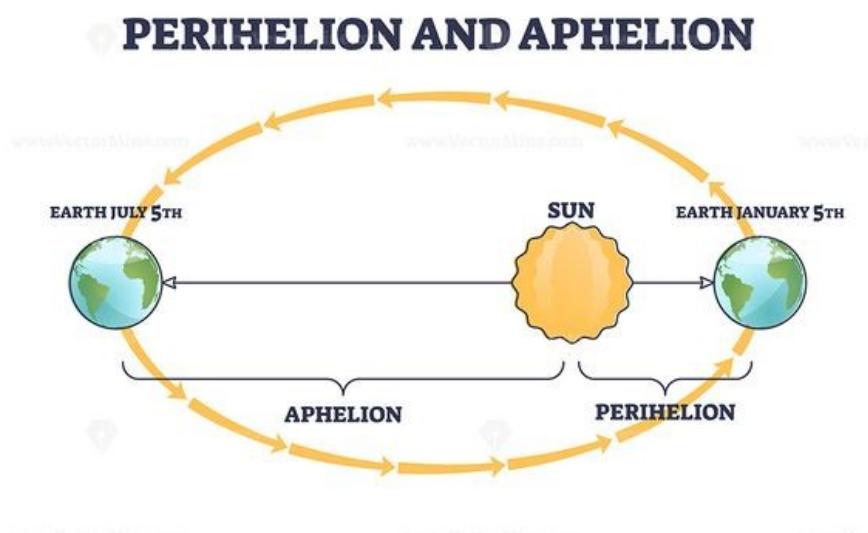
Key Points:

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.*