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July, 2022

Current Affairs

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Ashadhi Bij

The Prime Minister greeted everyone, especially the vibrant Kutchi community spread across the world, on the auspicious occasion of Ashadhi Bij.

About Ashadhi Bij

- Ashadhi Beej is an auspicious day for farming communities in North India especially Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and some other places.
- It is the second day of Shukla paksha of Aashaadha month, of the Hindu calendar,
- It is associated with the beginning of rains in the Kutch region.
- Kutchi community of Gujarat celebrate their new year on this day.
- During the time of Ashadhi Bij, moisture in atmosphere is checked to predict which crop would yield better in coming monsoon.
- Devotees worship Lord Ganesha, Goddess Lakshmi and other regional deities and organize satsangs.



Jagannath Rath Yatra

The famous Jagannath Puri Rath Yatra, also known as the Festival of Chariots, is believed to be the oldest and largest chariot procession in the world.



- This year, the festival commenced on July 1 in Puri, Odisha and will end on July 12.

About the Festival

- The Rath Yatra is unique for its three Hindu gods who are brought out of their temples in a colourful procession to meet their devotees.
- The festival is documented in Hindu sacred texts – Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Skanda Purana and Kapila Samhita.
- It is believed that Subhadra, sister of Lord Jagannath, desired to travel to Puri.
- To fulfil her wish, Lord Jagannath, along with his elder brother Lord Balabhadra, left for Puri in a chariot with Devi Subhadra.
- Since then, this festival marks the annual ceremonial journey of Lord Jagannath, brother Balabhadra and younger sister Subhadra.
 - This journey starts from their home temple to another temple which is considered to be their aunt's home.
- The Jagannath Yatra is the only festival whose rituals allow Hindu deities to travel from the Jagannath Temple to Gundicha Temple.
- All three chariots have their own name.
- While Lord Jagannath's chariot is named Nandighosh, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra's chariots are called Taladhwa and Darpadalana respectively.

Alluri Sitarama Raju

Prime Minister unveiled a 30-ft bronze statue of Alluri Sitarama Raju in Bhimavaram (Andhra Pradesh).

- The initiative is aimed at throwing light on the lesser-known contributions that helped the country wrest freedom.

About Alluri Sitarama Raju

- The occasion marks the 125th birth anniversary of Alluri Sitarama Raju and the centenary of the Rampa Rebellion, which he led.
- Alluri Sitarama Raju is believed to have been born in present-day Andhra Pradesh on July 4, 1897.
- He is said to have become a sanyasi at the age of 18.
- As a boy, was deeply disturbed when he heard about the untold miseries that the countrymen were suffering under British rule.
- He, then, channelized the discontent of the hill people in Ganjam, Visakhapatnam, and Godavari into a highly effective guerrilla resistance against the British.
- Colonial rule threatened the tribals' traditional podu (shifting) cultivation, as the government sought to secure forest lands.
- The Forest Act of 1882 banned the collection of minor forest produce such as roots and leaves.
 - Thus, tribal people were forced into labour for the colonial government.
- The warfare is famously remembered as Rampa rebellion of 1922-24 in the Visakhapatnam-Godavari agency area of the then Madras Presidency.
- After sending chills down the spine of the British, the fierce revolutionary laid down his life for the freedom of the motherland in 1924, at the young age of 27 years.
- Alluri Sitarama Raju is also famously known as "Manyam Veerudu" or the "Hero of the Jungle".
- The Rampa Rebellion coincided with Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement.



Mangarh Hillock

The National Monuments Authority has recently submitted a report on declaring Mangarh hillock in Rajasthan as a monument of National Importance to honour Bhil tribal freedom fighters.

- The hillock is situated at the Gujarat-Rajasthan border.



In Image: Mangarh Hill

Key Points

- It is a site of a tribal uprising where a massacre of over 1500 Bhil tribal freedom fighters took place in 1913.
- British forces opened fire on tribals gathered at the site who were holding a meeting in protest, led by a leader from the community Govind Guru.
- The place is also known as the Adivasi Jallianwala.

About Bhil Tribe

- Bhils are popularly known as the bow men of Rajasthan.
 - The name 'Bhil' is derived from the word villu or billu, which according to the Dravidian language is known as Bow.
- They are the most widely distributed tribal groups in India.
- They form the largest tribe of the whole South Asia.
- Bhils are mainly divided into two main groups the central bhils and eastern or Rajput Bhils.
- Bhil community comprises of over 1.7 crore population (2013 data).
 - They are spread across Indian states including Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Tripura.
- Bhils comprise 39% of Rajasthan's total population.
- They are considered as Schedule Tribe in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tripura.

About National Monuments Authority

- National Monuments Authority (NMA) is under the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India.
- It has been setup as per provisions of The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains AMASR (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010.
- Several functions have been assigned to the NMA for the protection and preservation of monuments

and sites.

- One amongst these responsibilities of NMA is also to consider grant of permissions to applicants for construction related activity in the prohibited and regulated area.
- The Act provides for NMA to be constituted with a Chairperson and up to 5 Whole Time and 5 Part Time Members.

Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO

India has been elected as a member of the Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO's 2003 Convention.

- The convention is for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and India's selection is for the 2022-2026 cycle.

Key Points

- The elections for the Intergovernmental Committee took place during the 9th General Assembly of the 2003 Convention held at UNESCO headquarters, Paris.
- Against the four seats falling vacant within the Asia-Pacific group, six countries, had presented their candidature.
 - These countries are namely, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Thailand.
- India received 110 votes from the 155 State Parties that were present and voting.
- The Intergovernmental Committee of the 2003 Convention consists of 24 members.
- The members are elected in the General Assembly of the Convention according to the principles of equitable geographical representation and rotation.
- States Members to the Committee are elected for a term of four years.
- Some of the core functions of the Intergovernmental Committee include:
 - promoting the objectives of the Convention,
 - providing guidance on best practices, and
 - making recommendations on measures for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
- The Committee also examines requests submitted by States Parties for the inscription of intangible heritage on the Lists.
- In the past, India has served two terms as a member of the Intergovernmental Committee of this Convention.
 - One from 2006 to 2010 and the other from 2014 to 2018.

Note: India had ratified the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in September 2005.

- With 14 inscriptions on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, India also ranks high in the listing of intangible cultural heritage.
- After the inscription of Durga Puja in 2021, India has also submitted the nomination for Garba of Gujarat to be discussed in 2023.

Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage- India

1. Tradition of Vedic chanting, 2008
2. Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana, 2008
3. Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre, 2008
4. Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India, 2009
5. Mudiattu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala, 2010
6. Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan, 2010
7. Chhau dance, 2010
8. Buddhist chanting of Ladakh, 2012
9. Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur, 2013
10. Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, 2014

11. Yoga, 2016
12. Nawrouz, 2016
13. Kumbh Mela, 2017
14. Durga Puja, 2021

National Emblem cast on the new Parliament Building

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi unveiled the National Emblem cast on the roof of the New Parliament Building.

- The National Emblem is made of bronze with a total weight of 9500 Kg and is 6.5 m in height.
- A supporting structure of steel weighing around 6500 Kg has been constructed to support the Emblem.

About National Emblem



- The State Emblem is an adaptation of the Lion Capital of Asoka at Sarnath.
- The Lion Capital crowning the Ashok Pillar is carved out of a single block of yellow sand stone and features four Asiatic Lions sitting back to back-
 - But the two dimensional representation of National Emblem depicts only 3, the fourth lion is hidden from view.
- The frieze of the abacus has sculptures in high relief of an elephant, a galloping horse, a bull and a lion separated by intervening Dharma Chakras.
- In the 2D form of the National Emblem, only one Ashoka Chakra is visible in the front with the galloping horse on the left and the bull on the right of it.
- The actual Lion Capital sits on an inverted lotus abacus which has not been included in the National Emblem representation.
- The profile of the Lion Capital showing three lions mounted on the abacus with a Dharma Chakra in the centre,
 - a bull on the right and a galloping horse on the left, and
 - outlines of Dharma Chakras on the extreme right and left was adopted as the State Emblem of India on January 26, 1950.
- The motto 'Satyameva Jayate', which means 'Truth Alone Triumphs', written in Devanagari script below the profile of the Lion Capital is part of the State Emblem of India.
 - The motto has been taken from 'Mundaka Upanishad'.
- The seven feet tall sculpture of Sarnath represents courage, power and pride.
- It was built in 250 BC to commemorate the first sermon of Gautama Buddha by Mauryan King Ashoka.
- The four animals are said to be guardians of the four directions — north, south, east and west.

- They are separated by a wheel, representing the Dharmachakra of Buddhism, on all four sides.
- Each chakra or wheel has 24 spokes. The chakra was later adopted as part of the national flag.
- As India won independence, the Constituent Assembly decided on the Sarnath pillar as the national emblem.
- It was felt that the pillar epitomised the power, courage and confidence of the free nation.
- On January 26, 1950, the Lion Capital of Asoka at Sarnath officially became the national emblem of India.
- The emblem represents the seal of the Republic of India.

DHAMMACAKKA DAY 2022

The President of India addressed the Dhammacakka Day 2022 celebrations at Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh on July 13th, 2022.

- The Ministry of Culture in association with the International Buddhist Confederation is celebrating the Āśha ha Pūr ima Divas.

Key Points

- Dhamma Day, a Buddhist celebration, marks the day when the Lord Buddha gave his first sermon to the five ascetics at the Deer Park in Sarnath, India.
- Also known as Ashadha Purnima, it is the second most important sacred day of observance for Buddhists after Vaishakha Buddha Purnima.

Relics of Lord Buddha

Four Holy Relics of Lord Buddha are being taken to Mongolia for an 11-day exposition to coincide with Mongolian Buddha Purnima celebrations.

- The Relics will be displayed at the Batsagaan Temple in Gandan Monastery complex in Ulaanbaatar.

Key Points



- The four relics come from among 22 Buddha relics, currently housed at Delhi's National Museum.
- Together, they are known as the 'Kapilvastu Relics' since they are from a site in Bihar believed to be the ancient city of Kapilvastu.
- At the age of 80, according to Buddhist beliefs, Buddha attained salvation in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar district.
- The Mallas of Kushinagar cremated his body with ceremonies befitting a universal king.
- His relics from the funeral pyre were collected and divided into eight shares to be distributed among the following:

- Ajathsatrus of Magadha,
 - the Licchavis of Vaishali,
 - the Sakyas of Kapilavastu,
 - Mallas of Kushinagar,
 - Bullies of Allakappa,
 - the Mallas of Pava,
 - the Koliyas of Ramagrama and
 - a Brahmana of Vethadipa.
- The purpose was erecting stupas over the sacred relics.
 - Two more stupas came up — one over the urn in which the relics had been collected and the other over the embers.
 - Stupas erected over the bodily relics of Buddha (Saririka stupas) are the earliest surviving Buddhist shrines.
 - It is said that Ashoka (272–232 BC), being an ardent follower of Buddhism, opened up seven of these eight stupas.
 - He collected major portion of the relics for enshrinement within 84,000 stupas built by him in an effort to popularise Buddhism

Sant Tukaram Ji

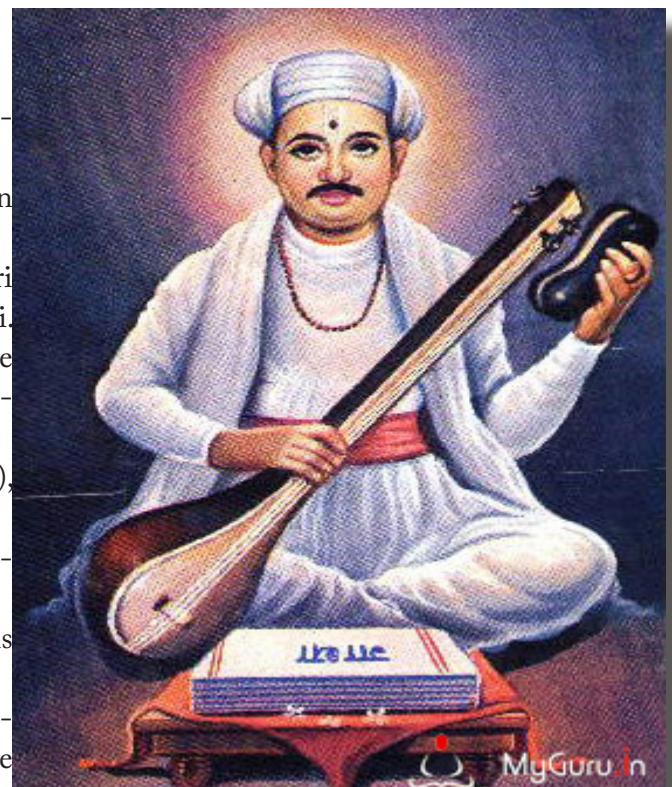
The Prime Minister paid tributes to Sant Tukaram Ji in Pune.

About Sant Tukaram Ji

- The full name of Sant Tukaram Abhang is Tukaram Bolhoba Ambile.
- He was a 17th century Marathi writer and saint of Bhakti development in Maharashtra, India.
- He was part of the egalitarian, personalized Varkari devotionalism tradition.
- Tukaram is best known for his devotional poetry called Abhanga and community-oriented worship with spiritual songs known as kirtans.
- His poetry was devoted to Vitthala or Vithoba, an avatar of Hindu god Vishnu.
- Saint Tukaram Abhang faced all the joys and sorrows of the world with courage and fixed his attitude at Vitthal's feet.

About Varkari Movement

- Varkari is a religious movement (sampraday) within the bhakti spiritual tradition of Hinduism.
- It is geographically associated with the Indian states of Maharashtra and northern Karnataka.
- In the Marathi language of Maharashtra, varik means 'pilgrimage' and a pilgrim is called a varikar.
- Every year, Varkari walk hundreds of miles to the holy town of Pandharpur, gathering there on Ekadashi.
- Varkaris worship Vithoba (also known as Vitthal), the presiding deity of Pandharpur.
- Vithoba is a form of Krishna, an avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu.
- Because of this association with Vishnu, Varkari is a branch of Vaishnavism.
- The teachers responsible for establishing and supporting the movement through its history include Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Tukaram, Chokhamela.



Martyrdom day of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur

National Monuments Authority is observing the great warrior Baba Banda Singh Bahadur's martyrdom on 25th June, 2022.



About Baba Banda Singh Bahadur

- Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was born in the Rajput family (1670, Rajouri).
- He was the first Sikh military leader to wage an offensive war against the Mughal rulers of India and extended the Sikh territory.
- He was the commander of the Khalsa army who defeated the Mughals and freed a large part of North India.
- He established the Khalsa rule in Punjab.
- Banda Singh Bahadur abolished the Zamindari system, and granted property rights to the tillers of the land.
- He was captured by Mughal ruler Farrukhsiyar and brought to Delhi and put to death in a most inhuman manner.
 - This martyrdom took place in Mehrauli where a monument still stands in memory of his martyrdom.
- He was also a great and true disciple of Guru Govind Singh Ji Sahib.

Vice - Presidential Election, 2022

By a Notification published in the Gazette of India, the Election Commission has announced for the Vice-Presidential Election.

About the post of Vice President of India

- The Vice-President occupies the second highest office in the country.
- He is accorded a rank next to the President in the official warrant of precedence.

Election

- The Vice-President, like the president, is elected not directly by the people but by the method of indirect election.
- He is elected by the members of an electoral college consisting of the members of both Houses of Parliament.
- It does not include the members of the state legislative assemblies.
- It consists of both elected and nominated members of the Parliament.
- Thus, the Vice-President's election is held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

Qualifications

To be eligible for election as Vice-President, a person should fulfil the following qualifications:

- He should be a citizen of India.
- He should have completed 35 years of age.
- He should be qualified for election as a member of the Rajya Sabha.
- He should not hold any office of profit under the Union government or any state government or any local authority or any other public authority.

Note: The oath of office to the Vice-President is administered by the President or some person appointed in that behalf by him.

Term of Office

- The Vice-President holds office for a term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office.
- However, he can resign from his office at any time by addressing the resignation letter to the President.
- He can also be removed from the office before completion of his term.
- A formal impeachment is not required for his removal.
- He can be removed by a resolution of the Rajya Sabha passed by an absolute majority (i.e., a majority of the total members of the House) and agreed to by the Lok Sabha.
- Notably, no ground has been mentioned in the Constitution for his removal.
- He is also eligible for re-election to that office. He may be elected for any number of terms.

Note: All doubts and disputes in connection with election of the Vice-President are inquired into and decided by the Supreme Court whose decision is final.

Powers and Functions

The functions of Vice-President are two-fold:

- He acts as the ex-officio Chairman of Rajya Sabha.
 - In this capacity, his powers and functions are similar to those of the Speaker of Lok Sabha.

- He acts as President when a vacancy occurs in the office of the President due to his resignation, removal, death or otherwise.

Note: He can act as President only for a maximum period of six months within which a new President has to be elected.

- While acting as President or discharging the functions of President, the Vice-President does not perform the duties of the office of the chairman of Rajya Sabha.

Constitutional Provisions

- Article 63: There shall be a Vice President of India.
- Article 64: The Vice-President to be ex-officio Chairman of the Council of States.
- Article 65: The Vice-President to act as President.
- Article 66: Election of Vice-President.

Nominated members of Rajya Sabha

President in accordance with the provision of the Constitution recently nominated new members to Rajya Sabha.

Key Points

- Article 80 of the Constitution (“Composition of the Council of States”) says “The Council of States shall consist of twelve members to be nominated by the President.
- The president thus nominates 12 members to the Rajya Sabha from people who have special knowledge or practical experience in art, literature, science and social service.
- The rationale behind this principle of nomination is to provide eminent persons a place in the Rajya Sabha without going through the process of election.
- The new nominated members are:
 - musician Ilaiyaraaja,
 - track-and-field icon PT Usha,
 - Telugu screenwriter V Vijayendra Prasad, and
 - philanthropist and spiritual leader Veerendra Heggade.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

The Union Agriculture Ministry announced that Andhra Pradesh has decided to rejoin the crop insurance scheme Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).

- Andhra Pradesh was one of six states that have stopped implementation of the scheme over the last four years.

About Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana



Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE

- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) scheme was launched in India by Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers welfare from Kharif 2016 season onwards.
- This flagship scheme was designed in line with the One Nation–One Scheme.
- It replaces three older initiatives—
 - Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS),
 - Weather-based Crop Insurance Scheme and
 - the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS)
- The scheme is being administered by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare under the Ministry of Agriculture.

- **Objectives:**

- Provide affordable comprehensive insurance cover against crop failure, damage, and loss.
- Expand penetration of crop insurance with a primary focus on covering the total sown area.
- Stabilise farmer incomes and ensure sustainability in agricultural production.
- Ensure flow of credit to the agriculture sector.
- To encourage farmers to adopt innovative and modern agricultural practices.

Details of the Scheme

- There will be a uniform premium of only 2% to be paid by farmers for all Kharif crops and 1.5% for all Rabi crops.
- In case of annual commercial and horticultural crops, the premium to be paid by farmers will be only 5%.
- There is no upper limit on Government subsidy. Even if balance premium is 90%, it will be borne by the Government.
 - 95-98.5% actuarial premium is fulfilled by the state and central governments and shared on a 1:1 ratio.
- The use of technology will be encouraged to a great extent.
 - Smart phones will be used to capture and upload data of crop cutting to reduce the delays in claim payment to farmers.
 - Remote sensing will be used to reduce the number of crop cutting experiments.
- All farmers growing notified crops in a notified area during the season who have insurable interest in the crop are eligible.
- Uptill Kharif 2020 season, the enrollment under the scheme was compulsory for following categories of farmers:
 - Farmers in the notified area who possess a Crop Loan account/KCC account (called as Loanee Farmers).
 - Such other farmers whom the Government may decide to include from time to time.
- Voluntary coverage may be obtained by all farmers not covered above.
- Risks covered under the scheme:
 - Comprehensive risk insurance is provided to cover yield losses due to non-preventable risks, such as Natural Fire and Lightning, Storm, Hailstorm, Cyclone, Typhoon, Tempest, Hurricane, Tornado.
 - Risks due to Flood, Inundation and Landslide, Drought, Dry spells, Pests/ Diseases also will be covered.

Note: When the scheme was launched in 2016, a total of 5.8 crore farmers were insured, wherein 75% farmers received mandatory coverage and 25% farmers voluntarily opted for insurance.

Revised guidelines for PMFBY

Government has modified operational guidelines for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY).

- All farmers including sharecroppers and tenant farmers growing “notified crops” in the “notified areas” are now eligible for coverage.
- Initially, the scheme was compulsory for loanee farmers; in February 2020, the Centre revised it to make it optional for all farmers.
- Centre decided to restrict its premium subsidy to 30% for unirrigated areas and 25% for irrigated areas (from the existing unlimited).
 - Earlier, there was no upper limit for the central subsidy.
- Inclusion of cloud burst and natural fire in localized calamities in addition to hailstorm, landslide, and inundation.
- Inclusion of hailstorms in post-harvest losses, besides unseasonal and cyclonic rainfalls
- Provision of Penalties/ Incentives for States.

Data Update under PMFBY

As per the data released by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare, the annual breakdown of value of insurance packages, share in premiums, claims filed, and claims settled are as follows:

As per the data released by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare under the Ministry of Agriculture, the annual breakdown of value of insurance packages, share in premiums, claims filed, and claims settled are as follows:

Financial Year	Amount Insured (Rs. crore)	Farmers' Share in Premium (Rs. crore)	Govt.'s Share in Premium (Rs. crore)	Claims Filed (Rs. crore)	Claims Paid (Rs. crore)
2016-17	203,120	4,042	17,531	16,773	16,759
2017-18	202,267	4,189	20,463	22,118	22,114
2018-19	230,061	4,853	24,504	28,941	28,004
2019-2020 [^]	142,969	3,018	20,524	20,975	20,090

Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2022-23

The Government of India, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, has decided to issue Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs) in tranches.

Key Points

- The Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs) will be sold through the following:
 - Scheduled Commercial banks(except Small Finance Banks and Payment Banks),
 - Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL),
 - Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCIL),
 - designated post offices, and
 - recognised stock exchanges viz., National Stock Exchange of India Limited and Bombay Stock Exchange Limited.



Features of the Scheme

- Issuance- To be issued by Reserve Bank of India on behalf of the Government of India.
- Eligibility- The SGBs will be restricted for sale to resident individuals, HUFs, Trusts, Universities and Charitable Institutions.
- Denomination- The SGBs will be denominated in multiples of gram(s) of gold with a basic unit of one gram.
- Tenor- The tenor of the SGB will be for a period of eight years with an option of premature redemption after 5th year to be exercised on the date on which interest is payable.
- Minimum size- Minimum permissible investment will be One gram of gold.

- Maximum limit- The maximum limit of subscription shall be 4 KG for individual, 4 Kg for HUF and 20 Kg for trusts.
 - A self-declaration to this effect will be obtained.
 - The annual ceiling will include SGBs subscribed under different tranches, and those purchased from the Secondary Market, during the fiscal year.
- Joint holder- In case of joint holding, the investment limit of 4 KG will be applied to the first applicant only.
- Issue price- Price of SGB will be fixed in Indian Rupees on the basis of simple average of closing price of gold of 999 purity.
 - This costing is published by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association Limited (IBJA) for the last three working days of the week preceding the subscription period.
 - The issue price of the SGBs will be less by ` 50 per gram for the investors who subscribe on-line and pay through digital mode.
- Payment option- Payment for the SGBs will be through cash payment (upto a maximum of ` 20,000) or demand draft or cheque or electronic banking.
- Issuance form- The SGBs will be issued as Government of India Stock under Government Securities Act, 2006.
 - The investors will be issued a Certificate of Holding for the same.
 - The SGBs will be eligible for conversion into demat form.
- Redemption price- The redemption price will be in Indian Rupees based on simple average of closing price of gold of 999 purity, of previous three working days published by IBJA Ltd.
- Interest rate - The investors will be compensated at a fixed rate of 2.50 percent per annum payable semi-annually on the nominal value.
- Collateral- Bonds can be used as collateral for loans.
 - The loan-to-value (LTV) ratio is to be set equal to ordinary gold loan mandated by the Reserve Bank from time to time.
- Tax treatment- The interest on SGBs shall be taxable as per the provision of Income Tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961).
 - The capital gains tax arising on redemption of SGB to an individual is exempted.
 - The indexation benefits will be provided to long term capital gains arising to any person on transfer of bond.
- Tradability -SGBs shall be eligible for trading.
- SLR eligibility- SGBs acquired by the banks through the process of invoking lien/hypothecation/pledge alone, shall be counted towards Statutory Liquidity Ratio.

India's Largest Floating Solar Power Project

India's largest floating solar plant is now fully operational at Ramagundam in Telangana's Peddapalli district.

- The 100-megawatt (MW) floating solar power photovoltaic project was commissioned by the National Thermal Power Corporation.

Key Points

- With the operationalization of 100-MW Solar PV Project at Ramagundam, total commercial operation of Floating Solar Capacity in Southern Region rose to 217 MW.
- Earlier, NTPC had declared Commercial operation of:
 - 92 MW Floating Solar at Kayamkulam (Kerala) and
 - 25 MW Floating Solar at Simhadri (Andhra Pradesh).
- The 100-MW Floating Solar project at Ramagundam is endowed with advanced technology as well as environment friendly features.
- Constructed with financial implication of Rs. 423 crores through M/s BHEL contract, the project spreads over 500 acres of its reservoir.



Benefits of Such Solar Plants

- From environment point of view, the most obvious advantage is minimum land requirement mostly for associated evacuation arrangements.
- Further, with the presence of floating solar panels, the evaporation rate from water bodies is reduced, thus helping in water conservation.

- Approximately 32.5 lakh cubic meters per year water evaporation can be avoided.
- The water body underneath the solar modules helps in maintaining their ambient temperature, thereby improving their efficiency and generation.
- Similarly, while coal consumption of 1, 65,000 Tons can be avoided per year and Co2 emission of 2, 10,000 tons per year can be avoided.

Non-electric cooling cabinet made of clay

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body of India, has developed an Indian Standard, IS 17693: 2022 for 'non-electric cooling cabinet made of clay'.

- Named as 'Mitticool refrigerator', Shri Mansukh Bhai Prajapati from Gujarat is the innovator behind the refrigerator which projects an eco-friendly technology.



Key Points

- BIS standard specifies the construction and performance requirements of a cooling cabinet made out of clay.
- It operates on the principle of evaporative cooling.
- These cabinets may be used to store perishable foodstuff without the need of electricity.
- This standard helps BIS in fulfilling 6 out of 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as-
 - No poverty, Zero hunger, Gender equality, Affordable and clean energy, Industry, innovation, and infrastructure, and Responsible consumption and production.
- It is a natural refrigerator made primarily from clay to store vegetables, fruits, milk, and also for cooling water.
- It provides natural coolness to foodstuffs stored in it without requiring any electricity.
- Fruits, vegetables, and milk can be stored reasonably fresh without deteriorating their quality.
- It is also playing an influential role in reviving the pottery culture, tradition, and heritage.
- Possible benefits:
 - promoting sustainable consumption;
 - economically empowering the indigent community;
 - working towards green and cool earth,
 - economic development and employment generation; and
 - finally contributing towards rural women upliftment and making them financially independent.

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

The World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is a United Nations observance day held on 17 June each year.

- It aims to promote public awareness of international efforts to combat desertification.

Key Points

The objectives of Desertification and Drought Day are:

- To promote public awareness of the issue.
- To let people know that desertification and drought can be effectively tackled.
 - Key tools to this aim lay in strengthened community participation and cooperation at all levels.
- To strengthen implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa.
- Spain is Desertification and Drought Day 2022 host.
- Drought, with a focus on early action to prevent disastrous outcomes, is the theme of the Desertification and Drought Day 2022.

Important Facts

- Globally, 23 per cent of the land is no longer productive.
- 75 per cent has been transformed from its natural state, mostly for agriculture.
- This transformation in land use is happening at a faster rate than at any other time in human history, and has accelerated over the last 50 years.
- The number and duration of droughts has increased by 29 percent since 2000, as compared to the two previous decades (WMO 2021).
 - When more than 2.3 billion people already face water stress, this is a huge problem.
- More and more of us will be living in areas with extreme water shortages, including an estimated one in four children by 2040 (UNICEF).
- An estimated 55 million people globally are directly affected by droughts every year.
- By 2050, droughts may affect over three-quarters of the world's population.
- Between 1900 and 2019, droughts impacted 2.7 billion people in the world, and caused 11.7 million deaths.



What is Desertification?

- Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas.
- It is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations.
- Desertification does not refer to the expansion of existing deserts.
- It occurs because dryland ecosystems, which cover over one third of the world's land area, are extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and inappropriate land use.
- Poverty, political instability, deforestation, overgrazing and bad irrigation practices can all undermine the productivity of the land.

About UNCCD

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), was adopted in 1994.

- It is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.

- The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands.
- The fourteenth session of the Conference of Parties (COP 14) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was held in India.
- The new UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework is the most comprehensive global commitment to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN).

Single Use Plastic Ban

CPCB has undertaken comprehensive measures to give effect to India's commitment to ban identified Single Use Plastic (SUP) items by 30th June, 2022.

Key Points

- CPCB's multi-pronged approach as part of its Comprehensive Action Plan encompasses following measures to reduce SUP:
 - to reduce supply of raw materials,
 - demand side measures to reduce plastic demand,
 - enabling measures to promote alternatives to SUP,
 - digital interventions for efficient monitoring and to create awareness, and
 - guidance to State Boards for effective implementation of directions.
- As per the Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rules, 2016, there is a complete ban on sachets using plastic material.
 - The ban is for using sachet for storing, packing or selling gutkha, tobacco and pan masala.
- As per PWM (Amended) Rules, 2021,
 - the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of carry bags made of virgin or recycled plastic less than seventy- five microns;
 - has been banned with effect from 30th September, 2021.
- Additionally, the notification of 12th August 2021, prohibits manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of the following identified single use plastic items:
 - ear buds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, plastic flags,
 - candy sticks, ice- cream sticks, polystyrene [Thermocol] for decoration;
 - plates, cups, glasses, cutlery such as forks, spoons, knives, straw, trays, wrapping or packing films around sweet boxes,
 - invitation cards, and cigarette packets, plastic or PVC banners less than 100 microns, stirrers.
- To curb the supply of identified items, directions have been issued at national, state and local level.
 - For example, all leading petrochemical industries to not supply plastic raw materials to the industries engaged in banned SUP production.
 - Customs Authority have been asked to stop the import of banned SUP items.
- As an alternative to the existing supply, enabling measures for promoting alternative to SUP are being actively pursued.
- CPCB has already issued one-time certificates to around 200 manufacturers of compostable plastic.
 - These certificates do not require renewal which is in line with ease-of doing business policy of the Government.
- Further, an online portal has been developed to facilitate certification of these manufacturers.
- To support the MSMEs, CPCB in association with CIPET is organizing Workshops for MSMEs.
- On the demand side, directions have been issued to E-commerce companies, leading single use plastic sellers/users, and plastic raw material manufacturers.
 - This has been with respect to phasing out of identified single use plastic items.
- To enable citizen participation, an SUP Public Grievance App has also been launched.



About CPCB

- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is a statutory organisation.
- It was constituted in September, 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- Further, CPCB was entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- It also provides technical services to the Ministry of Environment and Forests of the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

UN Ocean Conference

The UN Ocean Conference is a unique opportunity to boost collective efforts and find science-based solutions to effectively address the challenges that the ocean is now facing.

- The Conference is being co-hosted by Portugal and Kenya.



Key Points

- Leaders from over 130 countries from across the world will deliberate for five days to find an international agreement on protecting the world's oceans, seas and marine resources.
- The Ocean Conference comes at a crucial juncture as the world is seeking to address many of the challenges to achieve the SDG Goal 14.
 - The SDG Goal 14 calls for Conservation and Sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources.
- The overall theme of the Conference is: "Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions."
- Important Initiatives for Ocean Protection:
 - Proper implementation of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
 - To commit to protect at least 30% of the Ocean by 2030.
 - To call for a moratorium on deep sea mineral exploitation in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.
 - To Increase investment in, and scale up the implementation of, marine and coastal Nature-based Solutions (NbS).
 - To negotiate an internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.
 - To enhance Ocean science as a basis for informing effective management and policies.
 - To increase support for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.
 - UN has also proclaimed a Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)

Note: The first UN Ocean Conference took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York in 2017.

Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)

Department of Telecommunications to fund pilot projects under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

- DoT, Ministry of Communications has signed an agreement with Indian Telephone Industries (ITI) Limited and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL).
- The agreement is to fund the pilot projects of E-band, LTE indigenous technologies including integration of 4G/5G prototypes with C-DoT core.

About Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)

The New Telecom Policy - 1999 (NTP'99) provided that the resources for meeting the Universal Service Obligation (USO) would be raised through a 'Universal Access Levy (UAL)'.

- It would be a percentage of the revenue earned by the operators under various licenses.
- The Universal Service Support Policy came into effect from 01.04.2002.
- The Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003 gave statutory status to the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).
- Objective:
 - To provide a balance between the provisions of Universal Service to all uncovered areas, including the rural areas.
 - To provide high-level services capable of meeting the needs of the country's economy, and
 - To encourage development of telecommunication facilities in remote, hilly and tribal areas of the country.
- It is a non-lapsable fund, i.e., the unspent amount under a targeted financial year does not lapse and is accrued for next years' spending.
- As per the Indian Telegraph Act 1885, the Fund is to be utilized exclusively for meeting the Universal Service Obligation.
- This fund is deposited in the Consolidated Fund of India and is dispatched on the approval of the Indian Parliament.

Regulatory framework for Angel Funds

The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) had notified the IFSCA (Fund Management) Regulations, 2022.

- This was in furtherance of its mandate to develop and regulate financial products, financial services and financial institutions in the International Financial Services Centres (IFSC).

Key Points

The salient features of the said framework are as under:

- A Fund Management Entity (FME) in IFSC will be able to launch Angel Fund.
 - This can be done by filing a placement memorandum with the Authority under a Green Channel.
 - This means that the schemes can open for subscription by investors immediately upon filing the placement memorandum with the Authority.
- Angel Funds shall accept investments from accredited investors or investors who are willing to commit at least USD 40,000 over 5 years.

- Angel Funds are permitted to invest in start-ups as well as other regulated angel schemes in IFSC, India.
- The investment(s) by an Angel Fund in a start-up is capped at USD 1,500,000.
 - Although, the Angel fund is permitted to invest in subsequent rounds of fund raising by the start-up.
 - This has been done to protect its shareholding from dilution, subject to certain conditions.

What are Angel Investors?

An angel investor is usually a high-net-worth individual who funds startups at the early stages, often with their own money.

- An angel investor is also known as a private investor, seed investor or angel funder.
- An angel investor provides financial backing for small startups or entrepreneurs, typically in exchange for ownership equity in the company.

MSDE launches DBT scheme

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) announced that National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) will be a part of Direct Beneficiary Transfer (DBT) scheme.

- DBT in NAPS will help in providing direct government benefits to all apprentices.

Key Points

- Earlier companies used to pay apprentices the entire amount and then seek reimbursement from the government.
- With the launch of the DBT scheme, the government will directly transfer its contribution to bank accounts of apprentices.

Apprenticeship is a kind of training that is provided to a worker so that he or she can become skilled in a particular job.

TRANSFORM IAS
Transforming Lives with Education

About National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)

- NAPS was launched in August 2016 by Government of India to promote the Apprenticeship in the country by providing financial incentives, technology and advocacy support.
- As per the scheme, Government of India will share 25% of prescribed stipend subject to a maximum of Rs. 1500 per month per apprentice with the employers.
- Government of India will also share maximum Rs.7500 per fresher apprentice as a cost of basic training with Basic Training Providers.
- Employers who have engaged the apprentices before 1st October, 2016 will get the benefits of scheme from 1st October, 2016 only.
- State Apprenticeship Advisers (SAAs) and Regional Directorates of Apprenticeship (RDATs) will act as implementing agencies in their respective State/Regions.
- Objective: to promote apprenticeship training and to increase the engagement of apprentices from present 2.3 lakh to 50 lakh cumulatively by 2020.
- In budget 2021, the government has allocated Rs. 3000 crores in order to promote apprenticeship training.

Ranking of States' Exercise 2021

The results of the third edition of Ranking of States on Support to Startup Ecosystems were released.

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has been conducting the States' Start-up Ranking Exercise since 2018.

Key Points

- For the purposes of the Ranking, States and Union Territories are classified into 5 Categories, viz.

- Best Performers,
- Top Performers,
- Leaders,
- Aspiring Leaders and
- Emerging Start-up Ecosystems.
- Gujarat and Karnataka emerged as the Best Performers in a category of States which included NCT of Delhi.
- Meghalaya won the top honour among UTs and North-eastern (NE) States.
- While Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa and Telangana got the Top Performers award among states;
 - Jammu & Kashmir emerged as the Top Performer among UTs and NE states.
- Assam, Punjab, Tamil Nādu, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh were adjudged the winners in the Leaders category among states;
 - Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa bagged the Leaders honour among the UTs and NE states.
- Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan were declared as Aspiring Leaders among the States.
- Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, among others were the Aspiring Leaders from the UTs and NE states.
- Andhra Pradesh and Bihar from States category and Mizoram and Ladakh from the UTs/NE States were clubbed under the Emerging Start-up Ecosystem.

Note: The State Start-up Ranking Exercise aims to support states and union territories in developing their start-up ecosystem and learn from the best practices in each state and union territory.

- The exercise has grown in its impact over the last three editions, with 31 participating states and union territories this edition, the highest till date.

Apex Monitoring Authority of NICDP

1st meeting of the Apex Monitoring Authority constituted to review the activities of National Industrial Corridor Development programme (NICDP) took place recently.

- The Apex Monitoring Authority is headed by the Finance Minister.

Key Points

- The Apex Monitoring Authority comprises of the following:
 - Finance Minister as Chairperson,
 - Minister-in-charge, Ministry of Commerce & Industry,
 - Minister of Railways,
 - Minister of Road Transport & Highways,
 - Minister of Shipping,
 - Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, and
 - Chief Minister(s) of States concerned.

About National Industrial Corridor Development programme (NICDP)

National Industrial Corridor Development Programme is India's most ambitious infrastructure programme aiming to develop new industrial cities as "Smart Cities".

- It will also focus on converging next generation technologies across infrastructure sectors.
- National Industrial Corridor Programme is aimed at development of futuristic industrial cities.
 - So that they can compete with the best manufacturing and investment destinations in the world.
- The same will create employment opportunities and economic growth leading to overall socio-economic development.
- Government has approved development of 11 Industrial Corridors with 32 Projects to be developed in four phases as part of National Industrial Corridor Programme (NICP).

- The Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor was the first corridor taken up for development in 2011.
- Subsequently, other industrial corridors viz. Amritsar- Kolkata, Chennai-Bangalore, Vizag-Chennai, East Coast etc. were added to be part of the umbrella NIP.
- Under the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), Rs. 111 lakh crore of investment is the estimated requirement for the period ending 2024-25.
- The broad objective of NIP is to provide plug and play infrastructural facilities for setting up large scale manufacturing units.
- The National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NIC-DIT) under the DPIIT is the overarching institutional framework to implement the programme.

32 Projects in 4 Phases under 11 Corridors forming part of National Infrastructure Pipeline

- Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC)
- Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor (AKIC)
- Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (CBIC)
- Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCIC)
- Bengaluru-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (BMIC)
- Odisha Economic Corridor (OEC)
- Hyderabad Nagpur Industrial Corridor (HNIC)
- Hyderabad Warangal Industrial Corridor (HWIC)
- Hyderabad Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (HBIC)
- Extension of CBIC to Kochi via Coimbatore
- Delhi Nagpur Industrial Corridor (DNIC)



Private Sector Banks for overseas procurement

MoD has approved three Private Sector Banks to provide financial services in overseas procurement.

- This is in line with further opening of allocation of Government business to Private Sector Banks by the Department of Financial Services, MoD.

Key Points

- MoD has assigned three Private Sector Banks to provide the Letter of Credit and Direct Bank Transfer business for overseas procurement by the Ministry.
 - The private sector banks are HDFC Bank Ltd., ICICI Bank and Axis Bank.
- Till now, only authorised public sector banks were utilised to provide these services to MoD.
- With this for the first time three Private Banks have also been allowed to provide financial services for overseas procurement by MoD.
- The performance of these Banks will be monitored regularly so as to take necessary further action as required.

What is Letter of Credit?

- A letter of credit is essentially a financial contract between a bank, a bank's customer and a beneficiary.
- Generally issued by an importer's bank, the letter of credit guarantees the beneficiary will be paid once the conditions of the letter of credit have been met.
- Letters of credit are often used within the international trade industry.
 - It minimizes risk in international trade transactions where the buyer and the seller may not know one another.
- If you are an exporter, the letter of credit is insurance in case the buyer fails to pay for the goods you shipped.
 - In such a case, the financial institution will cover the amount outstanding.
- For exporters, a letter of credit can also be pledged as collateral against working capital loans to help you fill your order.

Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference

The WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) took place from 12 to 17 June 2022 at WTO headquarters in Geneva.

- The Conference was co-hosted by Kazakhstan.



Key Points

Agreement on Curtailing Harmful Fishing Subsidies

- The WTO passed a multilateral agreement that would curb 'harmful' subsidies on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing for the next four years.
 - Since 2001, member states have been negotiating the banning of subsidies that promote over-fishing.
 - The current agreement, which establishes new trading rules, is the second multilateral agreement in WTO's history.

- India and other developing countries were able to win some concessions in this agreement.
 - They successfully lobbied to remove a section of the proposal that would threaten some subsidies.
 - These subsidies were aimed to assist small-scale artisanal fishing.

Agreement on Global Food Security

- Members agreed to a binding decision to exempt food purchased by the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) for humanitarian purposes, from any export restrictions.
- The group's members issued a declaration on the importance of trade in global food security and that they would avoid bans on food exports.
- However, countries would be allowed to restrict food supplies to ensure domestic food security needs.
- India's key demand was to allow it to export food from its public stockholdings to other countries.
 - This demand will reportedly be discussed in the next Ministerial Conference in 2023.

Agreement on 'Covid-19' Vaccine Production

- WTO members agreed to temporarily waive intellectual property patents on Covid-19 vaccines without the consent of the patent holder for 5 years.
 - The current agreement is a watered down version of the original proposal made by India and South Africa in 2020.

Agreement on E-commerce Transactions

- India has also asked the WTO to review the extension of the moratorium on custom duties on e-commerce transactions.
 - The e-commerce transactions included digitally-traded goods and services.
- WTO members had first agreed to not impose custom duties on electronic transmissions in 1998.
 - The moratorium has been periodically extended since then.
 - All members agreed to continue the long standing moratorium on custom duties on e-commerce transmissions.

About WTO and the Ministerial Conference

- The World Trade Organization is the only international organization that deals with the rules of trade between countries.
- Founded in 1995, the WTO is run by its 164 members.
- Its aim is to promote free trade, which is done through trade agreements that are discussed and signed by the member states.
- The WTO also provides a forum for countries to negotiate trade rules and settle economic disputes between them.
- The Ministerial Conference is the WTO's top decision-making body and usually meets every two years.
- All members of the WTO are involved in the MC and they can take decisions on all matters covered under any multilateral trade agreements.

Note: WTO superseded the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) created in the wake of World War II.

StartUps for Railways

Indian Railways, the National transporter has taken an important initiative in field of innovation through participation of start-ups and other entities.

- The Railway Ministry launched a scheme called 'Startups For Railways' to provide funds up to 1.5 Cr for innovative technological solutions.

Key Points

This policy aims to bring scale and efficiency in the field of operation, maintenance and infrastructure creation through participation of very large and untapped startup ecosystem.

- There were over 100 problem statements received from different divisions, field offices/zones of Railways.
- 11 out of these 100 problem statements like rail fracture, headway reduction etc. have been taken up for phase 1 of this program.
- These will be presented before the start ups to find innovative solutions.

Indian Railways Innovation Portal

Ministry of Railways Government of India

75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

HOME ABOUT US POLICY CHALLENGES NOTIFICATIONS GALLERY INDIAN RAILWAYS CONTACT US LOGIN

Creating an Ecosystem for Encouraging Innovation

Ministry of Railways intends to engage with entrepreneurs, technology developers, and innovators to get low-cost user-friendly reliable products and innovative solutions for Indian Railways.

THRUST on INNOVATION

Ministry Of Railways to support Indian Startups/MSMEs/Entrepreneurs/Innovators with funds for development of innovative products & low cost solutions for IR

Objective is to leverage innovative technologies developed by Indian Startups/MSMEs/Innovators/Entrepreneurs to improve operational efficiency and safety on Indian Railways

- Ministry aims to address quality, reliability and maintainability-related issues of the Indian Railways
- Funding scheme will be on a cost sharing basis in equal proportion (50:50), between Indian Railways and Startup/MSME/Innovator/Entrepreneur
- Under the policy, the Startup/MSME/Innovator/Entrepreneur will have exclusive ownership of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) created in the project

Salient Features of the Policy

- Grant up to Rs. 1.5 Crore to innovator on equal sharing basis with provision of milestone-wise payment.
- Complete process from floating of problem statement to development of prototype is online.
 - The process has also a defined time line to make it transparent and objective.
- Trials of prototypes will be done in Railways.
- Enhanced funding will be provided to scale up deployment on successful performance of prototypes.
- Selection of Innovator/s will be done by a transparent and fair system which will be dealt through online portal.
- Developed Intellectual property rights (IPR) will remain with innovator only.
- Assured developmental order to innovator.
- De-centralization of complete product development process at divisional level to avoid delays.

Cabinet approves Auction of IMT/5G Spectrum

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister has approved a proposal of the Department of Telecommunications to conduct spectrum auction.

- Through the auction, spectrum will be assigned to the successful bidders for providing 5G services to public and enterprises.

Key Points

- Broadband, especially the mobile broadband, has become integral part of the daily lives of the citizens.
- This received a big boost through the rapid expansion of 4G services across the country since 2015.
- Eighty crore subscribers have access to broadband today compared to ten crore subscribers in 2014.

- The 4G ecosystem created in the country is now leading to 5G indigenous development.
- The 5G test bed setup in 8 top technology institutes of India is speeding up the launch of domestic 5G technology in India.

5G TO BOOST DIGITAL AND START-UP INDIA

-  TSPs to roll out 5G services across India
-  About 10 times faster than 4G
-  To unleash a new wave of digital innovations
-  Boost to India's Digital Economy



- Spectrum is an integral and necessary part of the entire 5G eco-system.
- A total of 72097.85 MHz of spectrum with a validity period of 20 years will be put to auction.
- The auction will be held for spectrum in various bands such as:
 - Low (600 MHz, 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz),
 - Mid (3300 MHz) and
 - High (26 GHz) frequency bands.
- It is expected that the Mid and High band spectrum will be utilised by Telecom Service Providers to roll-out of 5G technology-based services.

- These services will be capable of providing speed and capacities about 10 times higher than what is possible through the current 4G services.
- The spectrum auction will also be benefitted by the Telecom Sector Reforms announced in September, 2021.
 - The reforms include zero Spectrum Usage Charges (SUC) on the spectrum acquired in the upcoming auction.
 - This will provide a significant relief to the service providers in terms of the operating cost of telecom networks.
 - Further, the requirement of submitting a financial bank guarantee equivalent to one annual instalment has also been done away with.
 - Also, for the first time ever, there is no mandatory requirement to make upfront payment by the successful bidders.
 - Payments for spectrum can be made in 20 equal annual instalments to be paid in advance at the beginning of each year.
 - This is expected to significantly ease cash flow requirements and lower the cost of doing business in this sector.
 - The bidders would be given an option to surrender the spectrum after 10 years with no future liabilities with respect to balance instalments.
- The availability of sufficient backhaul spectrum is also necessary to enable the roll-out of 5G services.
 - To meet the backhaul demand, the Cabinet has decided to provisionally allot 2 carriers of 250 MHz each in E-band to the Telecom Service Providers.
 - The Cabinet also decided to double the number of traditional Microwave backhaul carriers in the existing frequency bands of 13, 15, 18 and 21 GHz bands.

Note: The term International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) is the generic term used by the ITU (International Telecommunication Union) community to designate broadband mobile systems.

Indian Silk Export Promotion Council observed Establishment Day

The Indian Silk Export Promotion Council observed its Establishment Day as a part of “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav”.

- The Indian Silk Export Promotion Council is organizing 11th India International Silk Fair in July.

About Indian Silk Export Promotion Council

- The Indian Silk Export Promotion Council (ISEPC) was established in 1983 as an Apex Body of exporters, manufacturers, merchandisers.
- It is a not for profit council, under Companies Act duly sponsored by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.
- ISEPC works closely with the Government of India on policy formulation concerning the silk sector.
- It provides specialized services to the trade, commerce and industry, enlarging global business opportunities for the silk industry in India.
- Main Activities of the Council:
 - Explore markets and identifies items offering export potential by conducting market surveys.
 - Establish contacts with the perspective buyers to generate their interest in Indian Silk products.
 - Sponsor trade delegation, study teams and sales teams to various market abroad.
 - Organize Buyer Seller Meets for its member exporters.
 - Organize Silk fairs and exhibition in India.
 - Resolve trade disputes.
 - Launch generic promotion of silk products from India.
 - Organize Workshops/Seminars on various trade and policy related issues.

PSLV-C53

IN-SPACE and ISRO successfully launched two payloads of Indian Start-ups in Space by PSLV C53 mission.

- ISRO undertook PSLV-C53/DS-EO mission on June 30, 2022.



Key Points

- PSLV-C53 is the second dedicated commercial mission of New Space India Limited (NSIL).
- It is designed to orbit DS-EO satellite along with two other co-passenger satellites from Singapore.
- This is the 55th mission of PSLV and 15th mission using PSLV-Core Alone variant.
- It is the 16th PSLV launch from the second launch pad.
- The mission proposes to demonstrate the utilization of the spent upper stage of the launch vehicle as a stabilized platform for scientific payloads subsequent to the separation of the satellites.
- DS-EO carries an Electro-Optic, multi-spectral payload that will provide full color images for land classification, and serving Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief needs.

About IN-SPACe

Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe or INSPACe) is a single-window autonomous agency under the Department of Space.

- It is created for allowing space activities and usage of DOS owned facilities by NGPEs (Non-Government-Private-Entities) as well as to prioritise the launch manifest.
- It will work out a suitable mechanism for promotion & hand holding, sharing of technology and expertise to encourage participation of NGPEs in space activities.

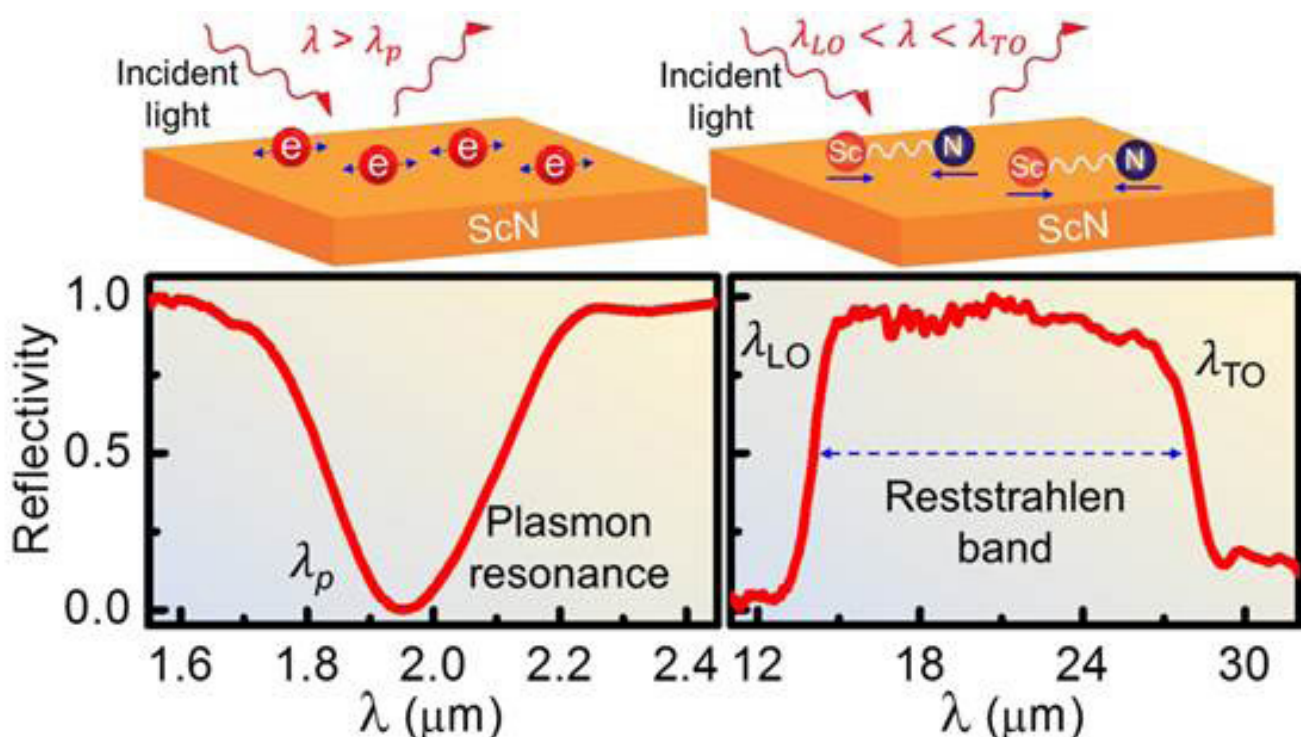
New Material Discovered

Scientists have discovered a novel material that can emit, detect, and modulate infrared light with high efficiency.

- This makes the material useful for solar and thermal energy harvesting and for optical communication devices.

Key Points

- Electromagnetic waves are a renewable energy source.
 - They are used for electricity generation, telecommunication, defence and security technologies, sensors, and healthcare services.
- Scientists use high-tech methods to manipulate such waves precisely -- in dimensions that are thousands of times smaller than the human hair, using specialized materials.
- However, not all the wavelengths of light (electromagnetic waves) are easy to utilize, especially infrared light, since it is difficult to detect and modulate.
- In a significant development, researchers have discovered a novel material called single-crystalline scandium nitride (ScN).
 - This material that can emit, detect, and modulate infrared light with high efficiencies.
- They have carefully controlled material properties to excite polaritons (a quasi-particle) and achieve strong light-matter interaction.
- These exotic polaritons in the ScN can be utilized for solar and thermal energy harvesting.
- Also, belonging to the same family of materials as gallium nitride (GaN);
 - scandium nitride is compatible with modern complementary-metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS) or Si-chip technology and,
 - therefore, could be easily integrated for on-chip optical communication devices.



In Figure: Light manipulation via charge carriers (electric dipole) of material including collective free electron oscillation (plasmon) and lattice oscillation (optical phonon) at the nanoscale dimension.

Note: The research team belongs to Bengaluru's Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), an autonomous institute of Department of Science and Technology (DST).

Rapidly charging E-cycle developed

Rapidly charging E-cycle developed Scientists have used nano-materials to develop Na-ion-based batteries and supercapacitors.

- These Na-ion-based batteries can be rapidly charged and can be integrated in e-cycles.

Key Points

- The low-cost Na-ion-based technologies would be cheap and are expected to reduce the cost of the e-cycles significantly.
- This is because of the high natural abundance of sodium and the consequent low costs of Na-ion batteries.
- These sodium materials are cheaper than Li-based materials, high performing, and can be scaled up to industrial-level production.
- The Na-ion cell can also be totally discharged to zero volt, similar to a capacitor, making it a safer option in comparison to many other storage technologies.
- Taking advantage of the fact that Na-ion batteries can be charged rapidly, Scientists have integrated it in e-cycles also.
- With further development, the price of these vehicles can be brought down to the range of Rs. 10-15 K, making them nearly 25% cheaper.

Aditya-L1 Science Support Cell

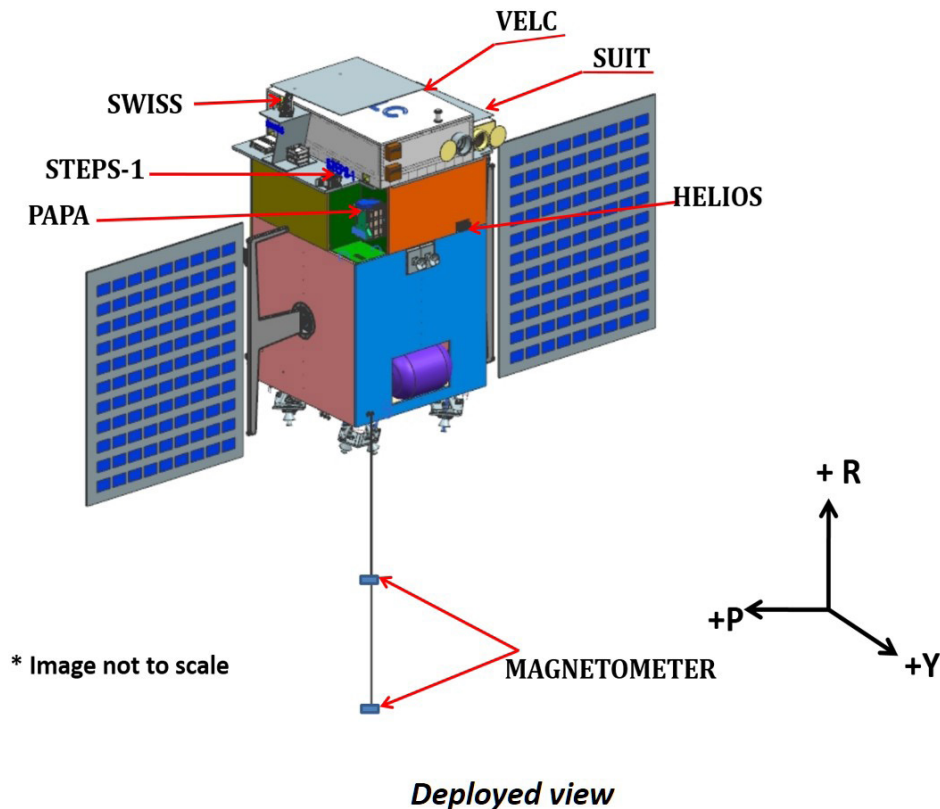
Students from institutions and universities across India were exposed to the basic processes happening on the Sun through Aditya-L1 mission.

- Students were also shown observational data analysis, as well as the current open problems that young researchers on the subject can address.
- This workshop was conducted by the Aditya-L1 Science Support Cell (AL1SSC).

About Aditya-L1 mission

- The Aditya-L1 mission is India's first dedicated spacecraft mission to study the Sun.
- It will enable a comprehensive understanding of the dynamical processes of the Sun and address some of the outstanding problems in solar physics and heliophysics.
- Aditya-L1 was originally conceived as Aditya-1 mission, a 400kg class satellite carrying one payload, the Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC).
 - It was planned to be launched in an 800 km low earth orbit.
- The Satellite will now be placed in the halo orbit around the Lagrangian point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system.
 - The orbit has the major advantage of continuously viewing the Sun without any occultation/eclipses.
- Therefore, the Aditya-1 mission has now been revised to "Aditya-L1 mission".
- It will be inserted in a halo orbit around the L1, which is 1.5 million km from the Earth.
- The satellite carries additional six payloads with enhanced science scope and objectives.
- Aditya-L1 with additional experiments can now provide observations of Sun's Corona (soft and hard X-ray, Emission lines in the visible and NIR).
 - It can also provide observations of Chromosphere (UV) and photosphere (broadband filters).
- In addition, particle payloads will study the particle flux emanating from the Sun and reaching the L1 orbit, and
 - The magnetometer payload will measure the variation in magnetic field strength at the halo orbit around L1.
- These payloads have to be placed outside the interference from the Earth's magnetic field and could

not have been useful in the low earth orbit.



Details of Various Payloads

- Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC):
 - To study the diagnostic parameters of solar corona and dynamics and origin of Coronal Mass Ejections.
- Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT):
 - To image the spatially resolved Solar Photosphere and Chromosphere in near Ultraviolet (200–400 nm) and measure solar irradiance variations.
- Aditya Solar wind Particle Experiment (ASPEX) :
 - To study the variation of solar wind properties as well as its distribution and spectral characteristics.
- Plasma Analyser Package for Aditya (PAPA) :
 - To understand the composition of solar wind and its energy distribution.
- Solar Low Energy X-ray Spectrometer (SoLEXS) :
 - To monitor the X-ray flares for studying the heating mechanism of the solar corona.
- High Energy L1 Orbiting X-ray Spectrometer (HEL1OS):
 - To observe the dynamic events in the solar corona and provide an estimate of the energy used to accelerate the particles during the eruptive events.
- Magnetometer:
 - To measure the magnitude and nature of the Interplanetary Magnetic Field.

India Stack Knowledge Exchange 2022

As part of the Digital India Week 2022 celebrations, a 3-days long virtual event on India Stack Knowledge Exchange was also started.

- The event is an opportunity to showcase India's most significant contribution to the Digital world - the India Stack.

What is India Stack?

India Stack refers to the ambitious project of creating a unified software platform to bring India's population into the digital age.

- It is the moniker for a set of open APIs and digital public goods that aim to unlock the economic primitives of identity, data, and payments at population scale.
- The bedrock of India Stack is a set of digital identity products centered around Aadhaar, India's national identity program.
- The four distinct technology layers provided are:
 - Presence-less layer: Where a universal biometric digital identity allows people to participate in any service from anywhere in the country.
 - Paperless layer: Where digital records move with an individual's digital identity, eliminating the need for massive amount of paper collection and storage.
 - Cashless layer: Where a single interface to all the country's bank accounts and wallets to democratize payments.
 - Consent layer: Which allows data to move freely and securely to democratize the market for data.
- The following APIs are considered to be a core part of the India Stack:
 - Aadhaar Authentication
 - Aadhaar e-KYC
 - eSign
 - Digital Locker
 - Unified Payment Interface (UPI)
 - Digital User Consent – still work in progress.

Statistics of success

Technology for 1.2 Billion Indians

67 billion

Total number of digital identity verifications

5.47 trillion

INR total value of monthly real-time mobile payments

2.8 billion

Total volume of monthly real-time mobile payments

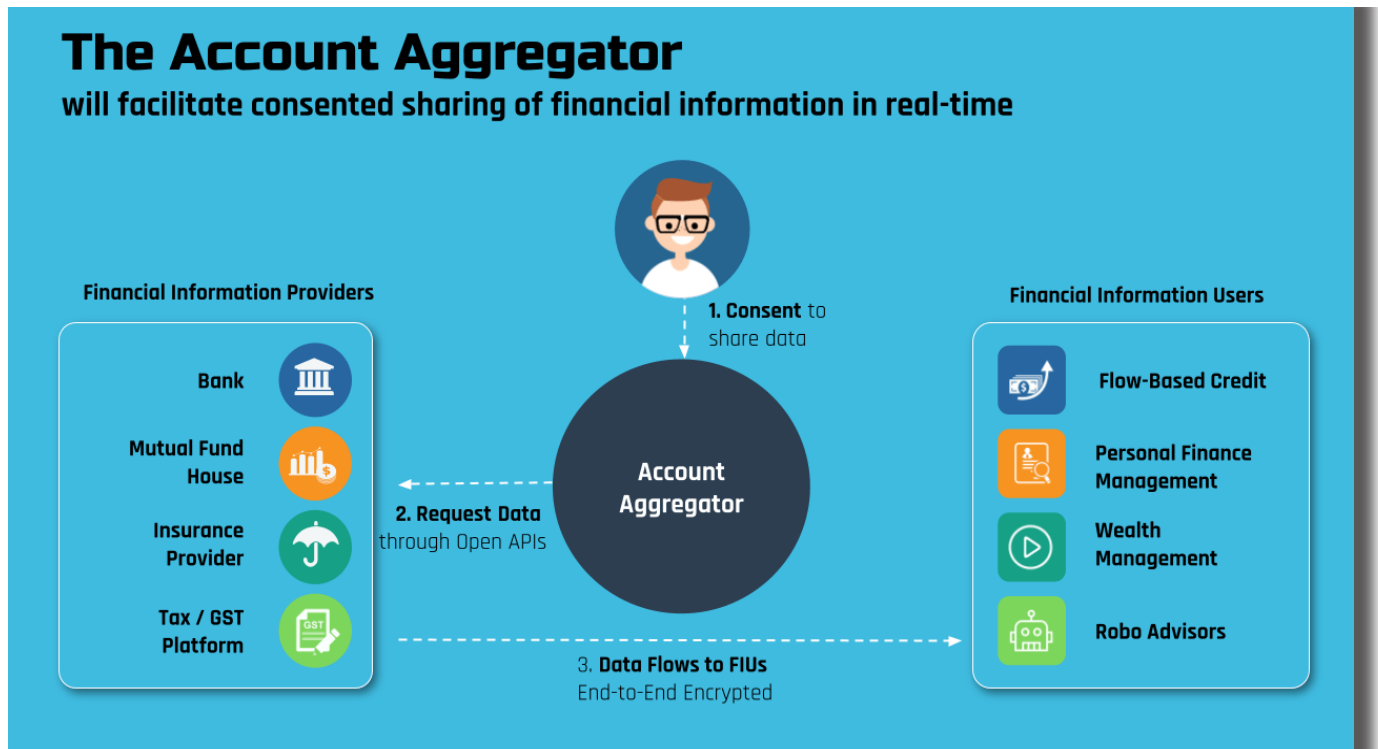
4

Operational Account Aggregators

The Timeline: India Stack Build-up and Success

- 2009- The Unique ID Authority of India (UIDAI) is formed.
- 2010- The very first Aadhaar card is issued.
- 2011- NPCI launches Aadhaar Payments Bridge & Aadhaar Enabled Payments System to channel government subsidies directly into Aadhaar-linked bank accounts.
- 2012- UIDAI launches eKYC which brings the Know-Your-Customer cost for banks down from ~\$23 to ~\$0.15
- 2015- CCA launches eSign as an open API, allowing Aadhaar holders to digitally sign any document.
- 2015- MeitY launches Digilocker.
- 2016- The number of Aadhaar holders crosses 1 billion.
- 2016- NPCI launches Unified Payments Interface, a revolution in real-time mobile payments.
- 2018- The number of mobile payments made using UPI crosses 1 billion.
- 2019- UPI monthly transaction volumes cross 1 billion.
- 2021- UPI monthly transaction volumes cross 4 billion.
- 2021- The Account Aggregator framework goes live with 8 banks.

What is Account Aggregator?



- An Account Aggregator (AA) is a type of RBI regulated entity (with an NBFC-AA license).
- An AA will help an individual securely and digitally access and share information from one financial institution they have an account with to any other regulated financial institution in the AA network.
- Data cannot be shared without the consent of the individual.
- Account Aggregator replaces the long terms and conditions form of 'blank cheque' acceptance with a granular, step by step permission and control for each use of your data.
- With an AA, the consumers can approve/manage/ revoke all their consent agreements in one place.
- The entire AA system is interoperable by design, so a service provider that integrates with one AA app can make data requests to users of any other app too.

National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI)

National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) introduced Internet Exchanges in Durgapur and Bardhaman to improve quality of Internet and Broadband services in West Bengal.

- It's an initiative under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) vision 1000 days.

Key Points

- The first Internet Exchange of the state at Kolkata is also run by National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI).
- It is now expanding its footprint in the state by launching the two new Internet Exchange Points at Durgapur and Bardhaman.
- Opening of these new IXPs will benefit every sector of the state ranging from health, education, agriculture, startup, ecosystem to MSMEs & other business verticals.
- NIXI plans to install such internet exchanges in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities in the near future.
 - Objective: to improve the overall Indian internet ecosystem and give internet users access to it at a low cost with improved speed.

About MeitY's vision 1000 Days

- MeitY's Vision 1000 Days has set a target of achieving \$1 Trillion Digital Economy for Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

- In this regard MeitY has also released a Vision Document on 'Increasing India's Electronics Exports and Share in GVCs'.
- It has been prepared by Indian Cellular Electronics Association (ICEA) in consultation with the industry.
- The Vision Document makes recommendations on short-term (1-4 years) and long-term (5-10 years) strategies.

About NIXI

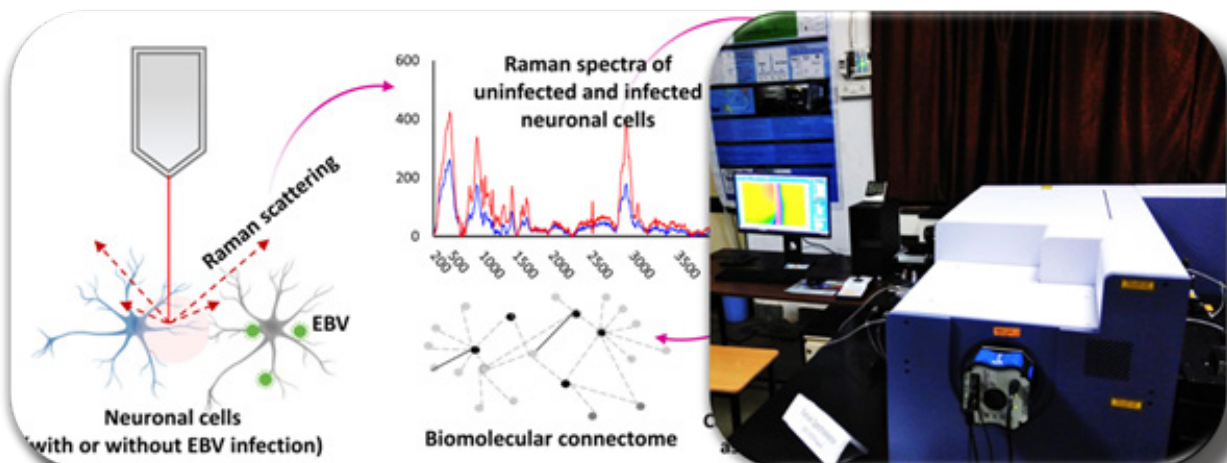


- NIXI is a not for profit Organization under section 8 of the Companies Act 2013, and was registered on 19th June, 2003.
- NIXI was set up for peering of ISPs among themselves for the purpose of routing the domestic traffic within the country, instead of taking it all the way to US/Abroad.
- This results in better quality of service (reduced latency) and reduced bandwidth charges for ISPs by saving on International Bandwidth.
- .IN is India's Country Code Top Level domain (ccTLD).
- The Govt. of India delegated the operations of INRegistry to NIXI in 2004.
- The INRegistry operates and manages India's .IN ccTLD.

Cancer-Causing Virus Epstein Barr Virus (EBV)

Scientists have found that cancer-causing virus Epstein Barr Virus (EBV) can infect the neuronal cells.

- This way they can drive various changes in biomolecules such as fatty acids, carbohydrates, and protein components.
- Then these changes can lead to diseases of the central nervous system as well as brain cancer.



Key Points

- EBV virus has been found to be widely present in the human population.
- It usually does not cause any harm, but the virus gets reactivated inside the body in some unusual conditions like immunological stress or immunocompetence.
- This may further lead to various complications like a type of blood cancer called Burkitt's lymphoma, stomach cancer, multiple sclerosis, and so on.
- Earlier studies provided links of EBV involvement in various neurodegenerative diseases.
- However, how this virus can affect the cells of brain and manipulate them is still unexplored.
- A research team from IIT Indore utilized the Raman micro-spectroscopy technique, to explore the possible impacts of a cancer-causing virus on brain cells.
- The study shows that there could be timely and gradual changes in various biomolecules in the neuronal cells under viral influence.
- Additionally, these changes were distinct when compared to the changes observed in other supportive brain cells (that is, astrocyte and microglia).
- They observed that the lipid, cholesterol, proline, and glucose molecules increased in the cells under viral influence.
- These biomolecular entities could ultimately play pivotal roles in the viral usurpation of cells.
- Further, the study also provided insights into whether these biomolecular changes can be correlated to virus-associated impacts and linked to neurological complications.

About Epstein Barr Virus (EBV)

- Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), also known as human herpesvirus 4, is a member of the herpes virus family.
- It is one of the most common human viruses.
- EBV is found all over the world.
- Most people get infected with EBV at some point in their lives.
- The first time one gets infected with EBV (primary EBV infection) he/she can spread the virus for weeks and even before you have symptoms.
- EBV spreads most commonly through bodily fluids, primarily saliva.
- However, EBV can also spread through blood and semen during sexual contact, blood transfusions, and organ transplantations.
- EBV can cause infectious mononucleosis, also called mono, and other illnesses.
- Once the virus is in your body, it stays there in a latent (inactive) state.
- If the virus reactivates, you can potentially spread EBV to others no matter how much time has passed since the initial infection.
- Diagnosis:
 - Diagnosing EBV infection can be challenging because the symptoms are similar to other illnesses.
 - EBV infection can be confirmed with a blood test that detects antibodies.
- There is no vaccine to protect against EBV infection.

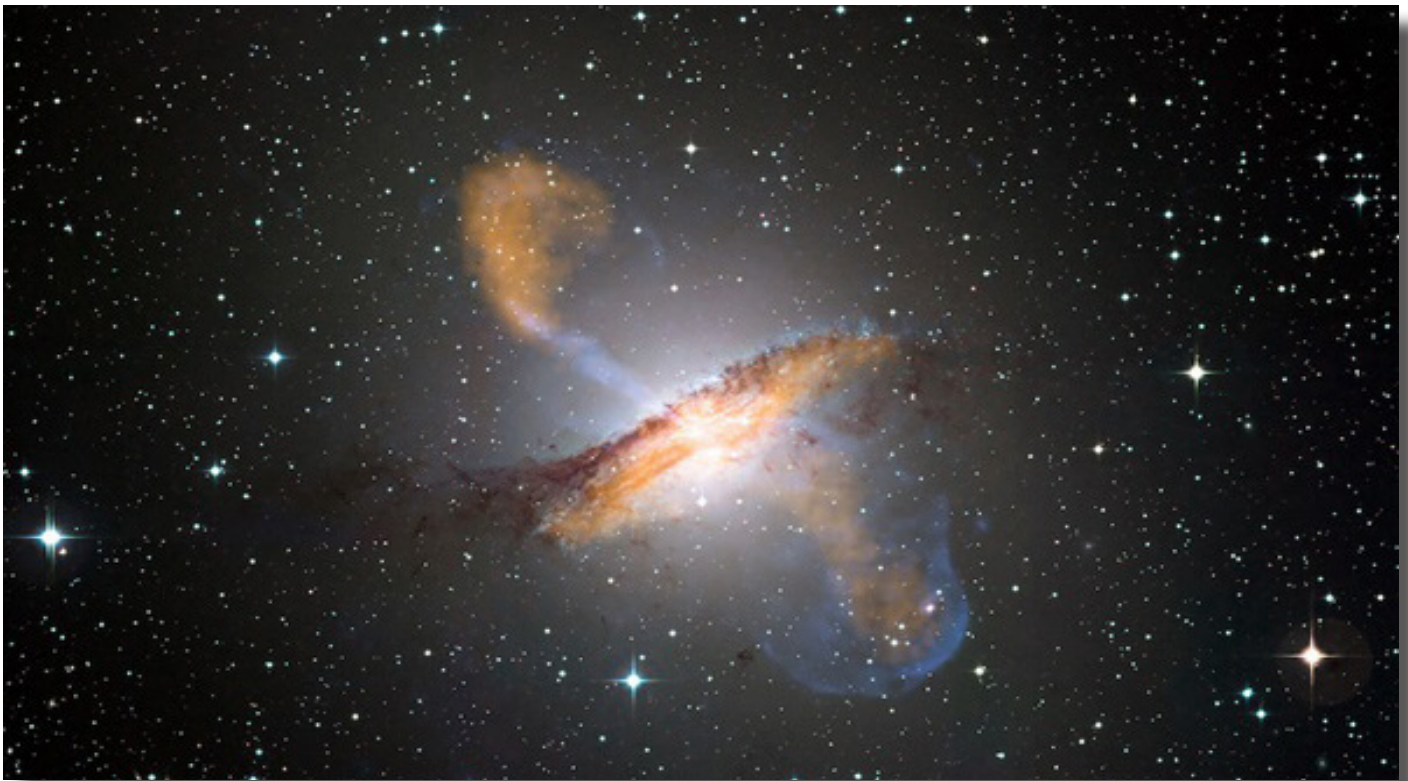
Binary super massive black hole

An international collaboration of astronomers has discovered a binary super massive black hole in a system which will be a strong candidate for future detection of gravitational waves (GWs).

Key Points

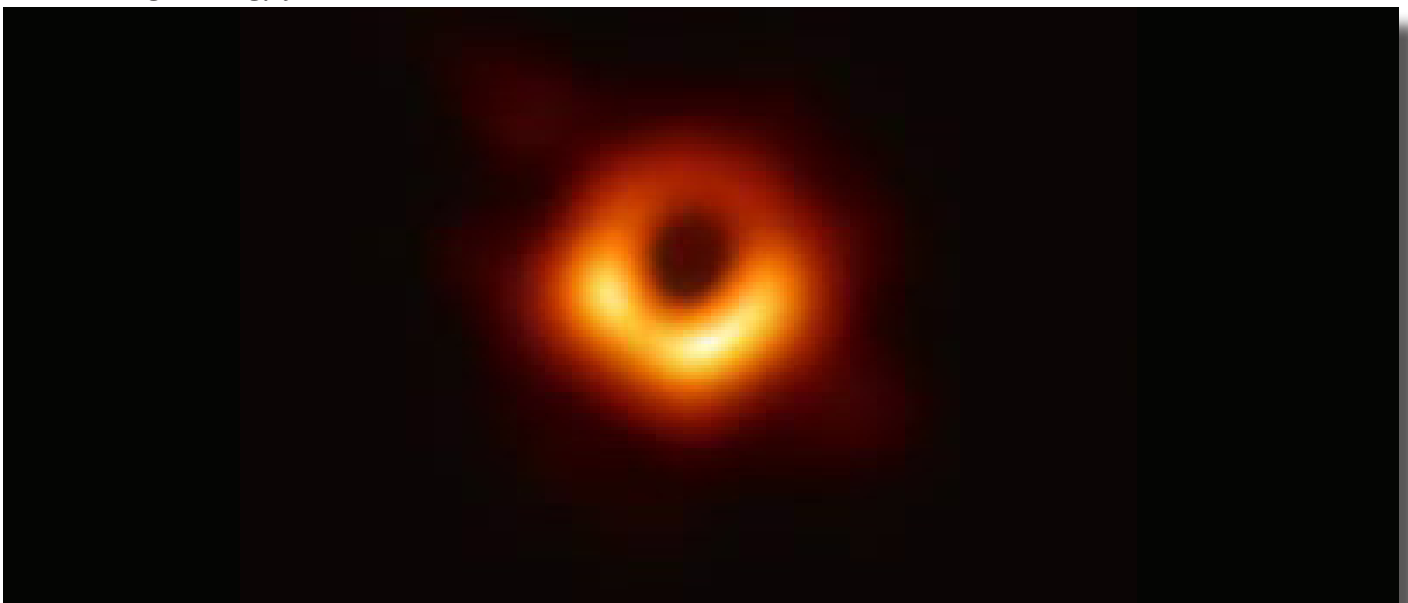
- A group of astronomers from Argentina, Spain, Italy, USA and India has discovered a binary super massive black hole system in the gravitationally lensed blazar AO 0235+164.
 - This has been done using extensive optical photometric observations carried out around the globe during last 4 decades (1982 - 2019).
- They discovered periodic double-peaked flaring events at an interval of around 8 years.
 - The separations between two peaks of these flares are around 2 years.
- Five such periodic patterns were detected, and it was predicted that the next such flaring event will occur between November 2022 and May 2025.

What is a Blazar?



In Image: Centaurus A, an active galactic nucleus ejecting material from its center, combines X-ray, microwave, and visible light images.

- At the center of most galaxies — including our own Milky Way — there's a gargantuan black hole that can have the mass of millions or even billions of Suns.
- In some galaxies, this supermassive black hole may collect a swirling disk of gas, dust and stellar debris around it to eat from.
- As material in the disk falls toward the black hole, its gravitational energy can be converted to light.
 - This makes the centers of these galaxies very bright and giving them the name active galactic nuclei (AGN).
- Some of these active galactic nuclei also shoot out colossal jets of material that travel close to the speed of light.
 - Scientists call this a quasar.
- But when a galaxy happens to be oriented so the jets point toward Earth— it's called a blazar.
- It's the same thing as a quasar, just pointed at a different angle.
- A blazar is a feeding super-massive black-hole (SMBH) in the heart of a distant galaxy that produces a high-energy jet viewed face-on from Earth.



What Is a Black Hole?

- A black hole is a place in space where gravity pulls so much that even light cannot get out.
- The gravity is so strong because matter has been squeezed into a tiny space.
- This can happen when a star is dying.
- Because no light can get out, people can't see black holes.
- They are invisible. Space telescopes with special tools can help find black holes.

Monkey Pox outbreak

The first case of monkeypox in WHO South-East Asia Region has been reported from India, in a 35-year old man who arrived from the Middle East.

- Countries have been taking measures to rapidly detect and take appropriate measures to prevent spread of monkeypox.



About Monkeypox

The WHO has said that a multi-country outbreak is currently underway, including in places where the disease has not been typically found before.

- Monkeypox is caused by monkeypox virus, a member of the Orthopoxvirus genus in the family Poxviridae.
- It is a viral zoonotic disease that occurs primarily in tropical rainforest areas of central and West Africa and is occasionally exported to other regions.
- Monkeypox virus is transmitted from one person to another by close contact with lesions, body fluids, respiratory droplets and contaminated materials such as bedding.
- Monkeypox is transmitted to humans through close contact with an infected person or animal, or with material contaminated with the virus.
- Monkeypox is usually a self-limited disease with the symptoms lasting from 2 to 4 weeks.
 - Severe cases can occur. In recent times, the case fatality ratio has been around 3–6%.
- An antiviral agent developed for the treatment of smallpox has also been licensed for the treatment of monkeypox.
- Monkeypox typically presents clinically with fever, rash and swollen lymph nodes and may lead to a range of medical complications.
- Human monkeypox was first identified in humans in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in a 9-month-old boy.
- Certain groups are more vulnerable to the infection, which can present some difficult phases, especially if it infects the lungs and eyes.
- The high risk group comprises children, pregnant women and immune-compromised patients, including those who have diabetes.

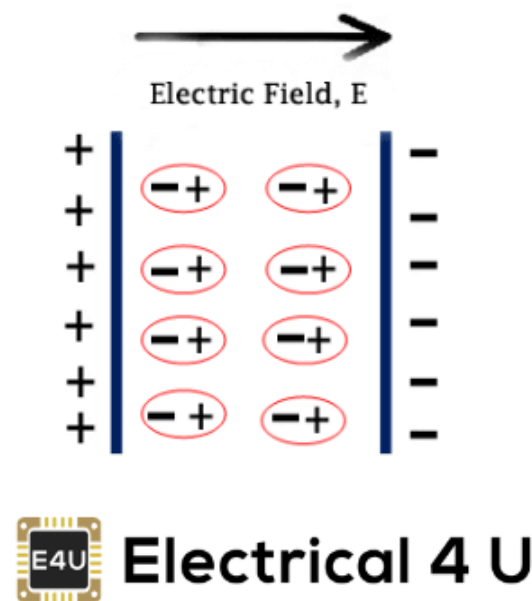
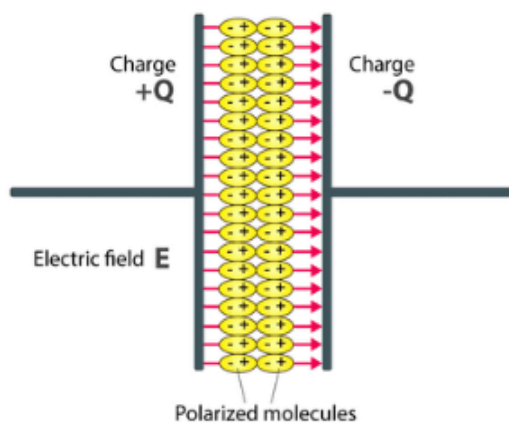
New memory device

Scientists have developed a memory device with excellent switching characteristics and low-power requirements for data storage applications.

Key Points

- Resistive memory devices with insulating film sandwiched between electrodes-
 - Such devices can address the needs of high-performance, and high-density memories with low power requirements for data storage.
- They are devices with resistive switching characteristics.
 - It refers to the physical phenomena in which a dielectric suddenly changes its (two terminal) resistance under the action of a strong current.
- Ms. Swathi S. P. and Dr. S. Angappane from the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS) have developed a low-power memory device with excellent switching characteristics.
- The device is made from the chemical hafnium oxide, a replacement for silicon oxide, for data storage applications.

What is Dielectric Material?



The CeNS researchers are converting these resistive memory devices into miniature forms.

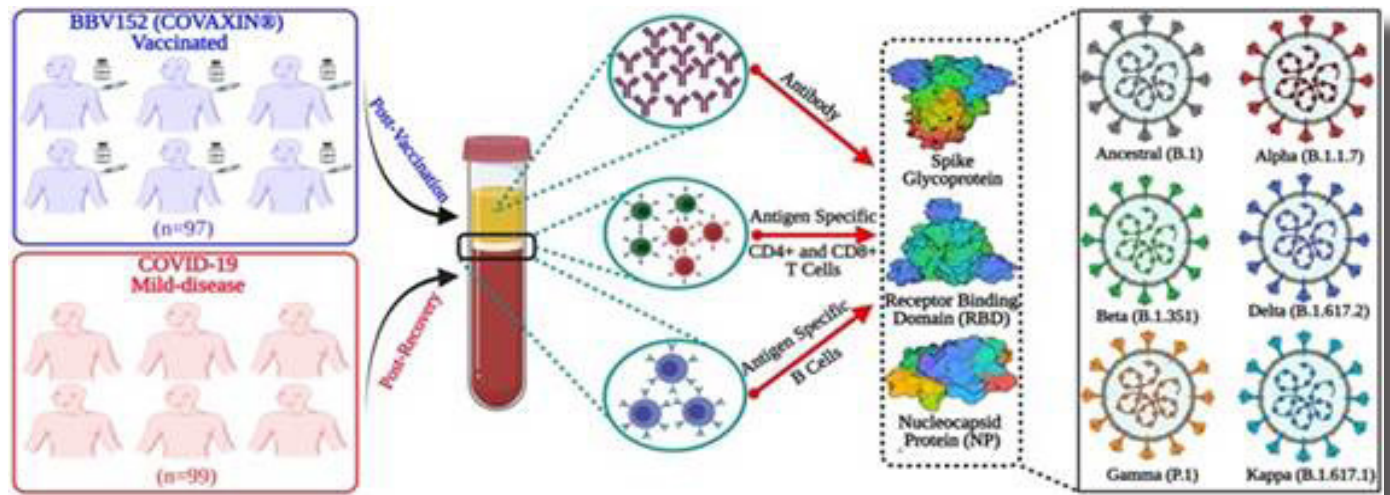
Covaxin controlling the virus load of SARS-CoV-2

Scientists have found that Covaxin, induces robust immune memory to SARS-CoV-2 and variants of concern.

- This may help in controlling the virus load and thus, reduce the disease severity.

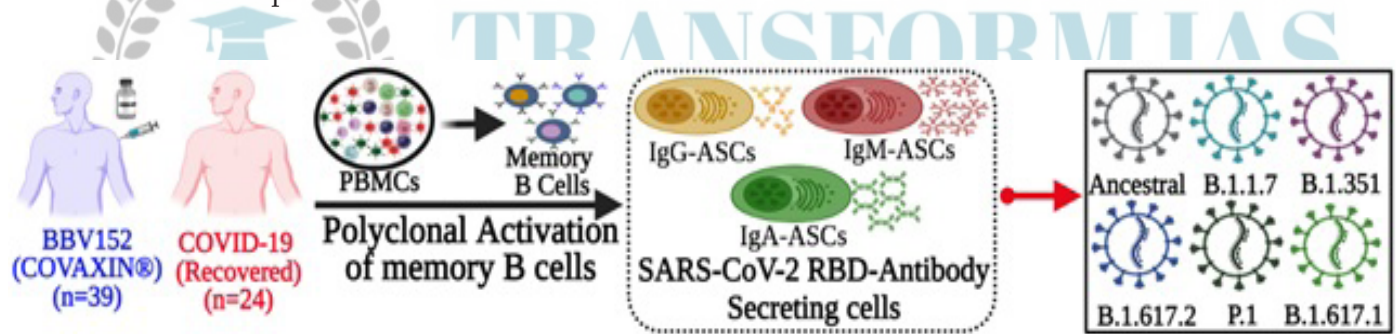
Key Points

- BBV152/Covaxin vaccine is based on an Asp614Gly variant and formulated with a toll-like receptor (TLR) 7/8 agonist molecule (imidazoquinolin) adsorbed to alum.
- It was the first alum-imidazoquinolin adjuvanted vaccine produced in India.
- It had also received emergency use authorization from WHO for use in a large population.
- Although the clinical trial data were available for the vaccine efficacy, important questions remained unanswered for the evidence-based policymaking particularly.
- These questions include:
 - Whether the vaccine induces immune memory?
 - How long the vaccine-induced memory persists? and
 - Whether these memory responses are able to sustain against the SARS-CoV-2 variants?
- National Institute of Immunology (NII), New Delhi, investigated 97 SARS-CoV-2 unexposed individuals who had received vaccine, up to 6 months after 2-dose vaccination.
- The vaccine-induced responses were compared with the immune memory in 99 individuals recovered from mild COVID-19.



In Image: The scheme representing the study design to determine the immunological effectiveness of the inactivated SARS-CoV-2 vaccine Covaxin.

- The study found that the vaccine produces antibodies against Spike, RBD, and Nucleoprotein of the virus, just like in virus infection.
- However, analyses of both the binding and neutralizing antibodies revealed a reduced recognition of variants of concern like Delta (India), Beta (S. Africa), and Alpha (UK).
- This study showed that the vaccine is capable of inducing memory B cells.
- They found this satisfying because antibodies may decline with time, but these memory B cells can replenish antibodies against the virus, whenever required.
- Their study provided the first-ever evidence of the detailed traits of immune memory generated in human in response to an inactivated virus vaccine.



In Image: The scheme represents the strategy to measure the SARS-CoV-2 specific memory B cells in the blood sample of participants received 2-dose Covaxin.

- The team also found that the vaccine showed potential of producing the SARS-CoV-2-specific T cells.
- Importantly, and unlike antibodies, the effectiveness of the T cells was well preserved against the variants.

Newly developed ultrathin heteroprotein film

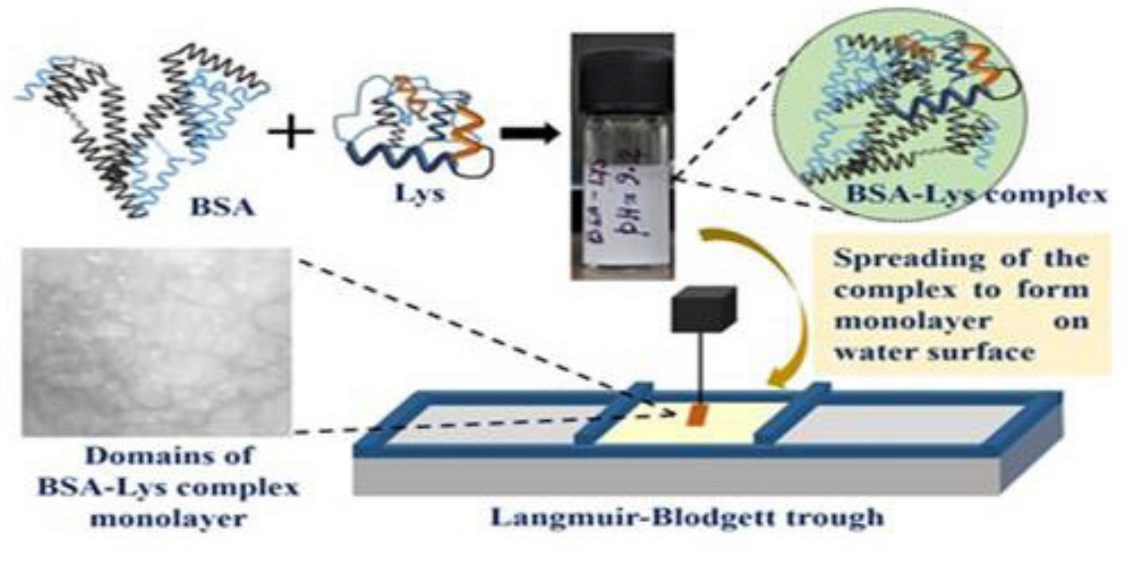
Scientists have developed ultra-thin heteroprotein films with excellent thermal, mechanical and pH stability.

- This can pave the way for expanding applications of thin films in biomedical and food packaging industries.

Key Points

- These films are much thinner as compared to the other protein or plastic films.
- They are soft and thin and have the advantage of being more flexible than the other films.
- These ultrathin monolayer protein films consist of two globular proteins: bovine serum albumin (BSA) and lysozyme (Lys).
- They used the technique called using Langmuir-Blodgett (LB) technique which gives the films thickness in the order of nanometer.

- Films of such protein complex of BSA and Lys can be useful for fabricating highly stable biodegradable thin film.



Indian Oil's Surya Nutan indoor solar cooking system

IndianOil and Ministry of Petroleum & Natural gas have developed an indigenous solar cook top “Surya Nutan”.

- Surya Nutan is a Stationary, rechargeable, and always kitchen-connected indoor solar cooking.

Key Points

- Surya Nutan is a patented product designed and developed by IndianOil R&D Centre, Faridabad.
- It offers online cooking mode while charging through the Sun which maximizes the system efficiency and ensures high utilization of energy from Sun.
- It also works on a Hybrid Mode (i.e. can work on both solar & auxiliary energy source simultaneously).
 - This makes the Surya Nutan a reliable cooking solution for all weather conditions.
- Insulation design of Surya Nutan minimizes radiative and conductive heat losses.
- Surya Nutan is available in three different models.
- Initially, cost of the product is around Rs 12,000 for base model, and Rs. 23,000 for Top Model.
- However, the cost is expected to reduce substantially with economies of scale.
- At a price of Rs. 12,000-14,000/- for Top Model, assuming annual consumption of 6-8 LPG cylinders, this product can pay back the buyer in first 1-2 years itself.
- It is a modular system and can be designed in different sizes as per the requirement.



C-DOT signs agreement with Galore Networks

C-DOT and Galore Networks have signed an agreement for collaborative development of end-to-end 5G RAN products & solutions.

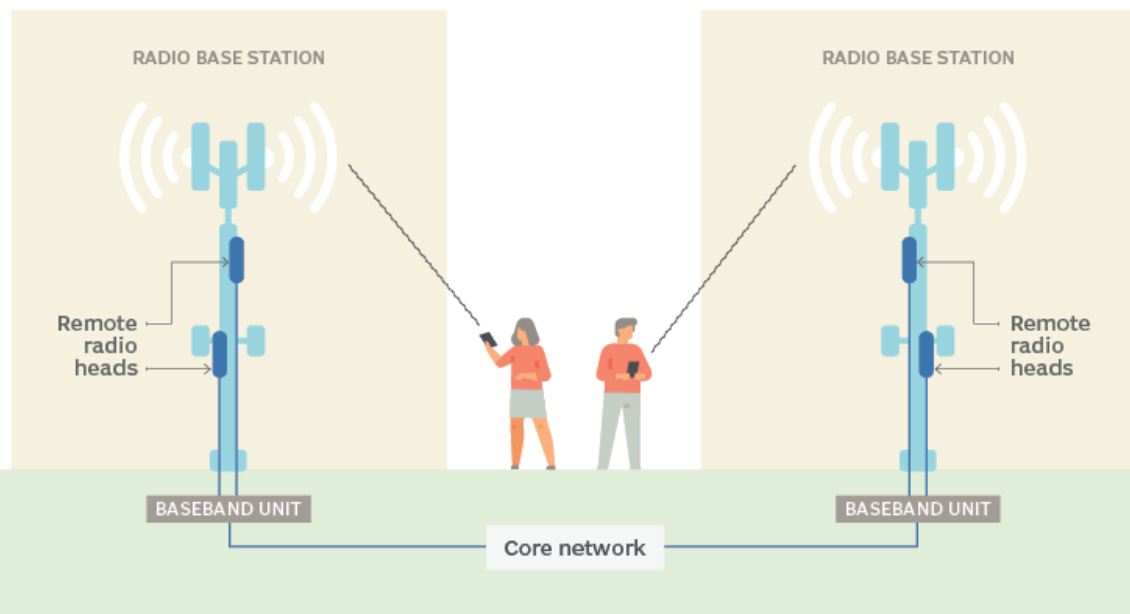
- This is in furtherance of its endeavour to boost indigenous development of 5G.

Key Points

- Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) is keen on building robust partnerships with various stakeholders of indigenous 5G ecosystem.

- This will bring the technical competencies and complementary strengths of Indian R&D and industry on a single unified platform.
- This will in return lead to creation of indigenous Intellectual Property (IP) assets.
 - That can generate new avenues for wider reach and commercialization of home-grown technologies at global level.

Basic RAN architecture



What is RAN?

- A radio access network (RAN) connects individual devices to other parts of a network through radio connections.
- The RAN links user equipment, such as a cellphone, computer or any remotely controlled machine, over a fiber or wireless backhaul connection.
- It is a major component of modern telecommunications with different generations of mobile networking evolving from 1G through 5G.
- The RAN includes a base station and antennas that cover a specific region according to its capacity, design and propagation.

About C-DOT

Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) is the premier R&D centre of the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications.

- C-DOT has indigenously designed and developed various cutting-edge Telecom technologies.
- C-DOT has developed its indigenous 4G solution and is keenly working in the area of 5G.

100th International Day of Cooperatives

On July 2, cooperatives around the world will commemorate the 100th International Day of Cooperatives (CoopsDay).

- This year's #CoopsDay slogan is — “Cooperatives Build a Better World”.



Key Points

- This year marks a decade since the United Nations announced the International Year of Cooperatives in 2012.
- The Ministry of Cooperation and NCUI are co-organizing an event under the theme “Cooperatives Build an Atmanirbhar Bharat and a Better World.”
- India has the world's largest cooperative movement.
- Cooperatives are now pivotal institutions in India, with a network of over 8.5 lakh covering 90 percent of villages.
- Some well-known cooperative success stories in India include AMUL, IFFCO, KRIBHCO, NAFED, and others.
- The Union Government had also established the Ministry of Cooperation in July 2021 to provide proper impetus to the cooperative sector.

What is a Cooperative?

A Cooperative is defined as an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common Economic, Social and Cultural needs.

- A Cooperative is based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity.
- So, it is a member-driven and democratically self-managed association of persons united voluntarily for the achievement of common goal.

History of Cooperative Movement in India

- The Cooperative Movement in India was born out of the distress and turmoil that prevailed in the last quarter of the 19th century.
- The Industrial Revolution had given a death blow to village industries.

- Even before formal cooperative structures came into being through the passing of a law-
 - The practice of the concept of cooperation and cooperative activities were prevalent in several parts of India.
- The early forms of Cooperatives were the organization of Nidhis and Chit Funds in Southern India.
- It is also recorded that in 1892 Sir Frederick Nicholson was sent to Europe to study the structures of Cooperatives out there.
- It was he who recommended the formation of the Rural Cooperative Credit Societies adopting the German pattern called Raiffeisen.
- Then the Primary Credit Societies were also formed by the Government of India with the enactment of the Cooperative Credit Societies Act 1904.
- With the Cooperative Societies Act 1912 the Government formed the non-credit Societies and also Federal Cooperative Organizations in the Country.
- In 1915, a committee headed by Sir Edward Maclagan was also appointed.
 - Objective: to study and report whether the cooperative movement was proceeding on economically and financially sound lines.
- According to the Government of India Act 1919, the Cooperative Societies turned into a transferred subject.
 - Many provinces began to enact their own Cooperative Societies Act.
- Again, with the Government of India Act 1935, these Cooperative Societies turned to be a State subject matter.
- The Reserve Bank of India in 1951, appointed the All India Rural Credit Committee (AIRCC) which submitted its detailed Report in the year 1954.
- The committee recommended wide areas of operation for Village Societies with a view to uplift their economic viability.

Constitutional Provisions of Cooperatives

The Constitution (97th Amendment) Act, 2011 added a new Part IXB right after Part IXA (Municipals) regarding the cooperatives working in India.

- A new Article 43B was added in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV) regarding the “promotion of cooperative societies”.
- The word “cooperatives” was added after “unions and associations” in Article 19(1)(c) under Part III of the Constitution.

No Service Charge

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued guidelines for preventing unfair trade practices and violation of consumer rights.

- This is with regard to levying of service charge in hotels and restaurants.

Key Points

- The guidelines issued by CCPA stipulate that hotels or restaurant shall not add service charge automatically or by default in the food bill.
- No collection of service charge shall be done by any other name.
- No hotel or restaurant shall force a consumer to pay service charge and shall clearly inform the consumer that service charge is voluntary, optional and at consumer's discretion.
- No restriction on entry or provision of services based on collection of service charge shall be imposed on consumers.
- Service charge shall not be collected by adding it along with the food bill and levying GST on the total amount.
- If any consumer finds that a hotel or restaurant is levying service charge in violation to the guidelines-
 - Then the consumer may make a request to the concerned hotel or restaurant to remove service

charge from the bill amount.

- Also, the consumer may lodge a complaint on the National Consumer Helpline (NCH).
 - NCH works as an alternate dispute redressal mechanism at the pre-litigation level by calling 1915 or through the NCH mobile app.
- The consumer may also file a complaint against unfair trade practice with the Consumer Commission.
 - The Complaint can also be filed electronically through e-daakhil portal www.e-daakhil.nic.in for its speedy and effective redressal.

About Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)



The authority is constituted under Section 10(1) of The Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

- CCPA will regulate matters related to violation of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and misleading advertisements.
- The CCPA will have an investigation wing, headed by a Director-General, which may conduct inquiry or investigation into such violations.
- Functions:
 - inquiring into violations of consumer rights, investigating and launching prosecution at the appropriate forum;
 - passing orders to recall goods or withdraw services that are hazardous, reimbursement of the price paid, and discontinuation of the unfair trade practices, as defined in the Bill;
 - issuing directions to the concerned trader/ manufacturer/ endorser/ advertiser/ publisher to either discontinue a false or misleading advertisement, or modify it;
 - imposing penalties, and;
 - issuing safety notices to consumers against unsafe goods and services.
- The CCPA may impose a penalty on a manufacturer or an endorser of up to Rs 10 lakh and imprisonment for up to two years for a false or misleading advertisement.
 - In case of a subsequent offence, the fine may extend to Rs 50 lakh and imprisonment of up to five years.
- CCPA can also prohibit the endorser of a misleading advertisement from endorsing that particular product or service for a period of up to one year.
- Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission:
 - Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (CDRCs) is also set up at the district, state, and national levels.

Who is a Consumer?

- A consumer is defined as a person who buys any good or avails a service for a consideration.
- It does not include a person who obtains a good for resale or a good or service for commercial purpose.
- It covers transactions through all modes including offline, and online through electronic means, teleshopping, multi-level marketing or direct selling.

India's First Ever Animal Health Summit

The first India Animal Health Summit 2022 was held at the NASC Complex in New Delhi.

- The goal is to understand the importance of animal health to the country's food and nutrition security, rural income and prosperity, and overall economic development.

Key Points

- Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying inaugurated India's first-ever Animal Health Summit 2022.
- In terms of food security, nutrition, and overall sustainability, animals and animal products are critical components of the country's development.
- The total livestock population in the country is 535.78 million, a 4.6 percent increase from the 2012 Livestock Census.
- The total bovine population was 302.79 million in 2019, a 1.0 percent increase from the previous census.
- India has the most cattle and produces the most milk in the world, but per-animal productivity remains low.
- Low productivity can be caused by a variety of factors, the most important of which is animal health, which has a significant impact on productivity.
- Zoonotic diseases have emerged as global health threats as a result of the complex interactions between humans, animals, and the environment.
- Disease surveillance in animals has the added benefit of protecting humans through early diagnosis.
- To address animal health issues and scale-up government efforts across states,
 - Such an event is being organised so as to create a sustainable animal health sector.

22nd National Fish Farmers Day

National Fisheries Development Board, Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, celebrated the 22nd National Fish Farmers Day.

- Every year on July 10th, National Fish Farmer's Day is observed to show solidarity with all fisher folk, fish farmers, and concerned stakeholders across the country.

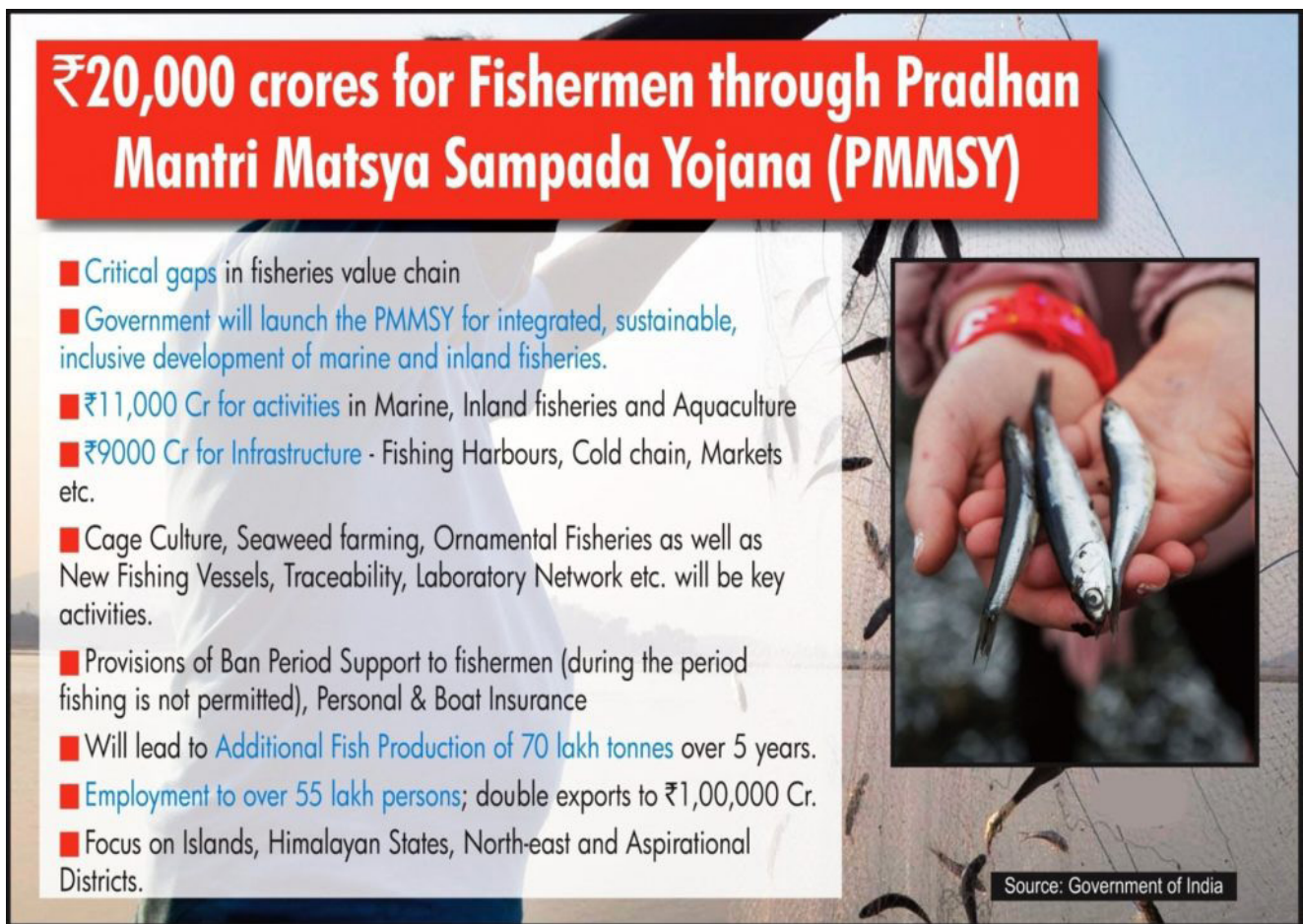
Key Points

- This annual event is held to honour Professor Dr. Hiralal Chaudhury and his colleague Dr. Alikunhi.
- They helped in achieving the successful induced breeding of major carps for the first time in the country on July 10, 1957, at Angul in Odisha.
- It was done through the administration of carp pituitary hormone extract in the breeding of major carps.
- Later, the technology was standardized and fine-tuned by developing synthetic hormones for high-quality seed production throughout the country.
- Over the years, this pioneering work in induced breeding has transformed the aquaculture sector's growth from traditional to intensive aquaculture practices.
 - Thus, resulting in the success of the modern aquaculture industry.
- The Government of India is trying transforming the fisheries sector and bringing about an economic revolution in the country through the Blue Revolution.

What is Blue Revolution?

- Blue Revolution, the Neel Kranti Mission has the vision to achieve economic prosperity of the country and the fishers and fish farmers.
 - It also aims to contribute towards food and nutritional security through full potential utilization of water resources for fisheries development in a sustainable manner.

- Objectives
 - To increase the overall fish production in a responsible and sustainable manner for economic prosperity.
 - To modernize the fisheries with special focus on new technologies.
 - To ensure food and nutritional security.
 - To generate employment and export earnings.
 - To ensure inclusive development and empower fishers and aquaculture farmers.
- The Government of India in May, 2020 approved the “Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).
 - A scheme to bring about Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector.
 - The scheme has an estimated investment of Rs. 20050 crores.



₹20,000 crores for Fishermen through Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

- Critical gaps in fisheries value chain
- Government will launch the PMMSY for integrated, sustainable, inclusive development of marine and inland fisheries.
- ₹11,000 Cr for activities in Marine, Inland fisheries and Aquaculture
- ₹9000 Cr for Infrastructure - Fishing Harbours, Cold chain, Markets etc.
- Cage Culture, Seaweed farming, Ornamental Fisheries as well as New Fishing Vessels, Traceability, Laboratory Network etc. will be key activities.
- Provisions of Ban Period Support to fishermen (during the period fishing is not permitted), Personal & Boat Insurance
- Will lead to Additional Fish Production of 70 lakh tonnes over 5 years.
- Employment to over 55 lakh persons; double exports to ₹1,00,000 Cr.
- Focus on Islands, Himalayan States, North-east and Aspirational Districts.

Source: Government of India

Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Mela

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will be organising the Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Mela every month now on.

- The objective is to connect the youth with more opportunities of on-ground training within corporates and further a chance to get employment.

Key Points

- The PM National Apprenticeship Mela will take place across 200+ locations in India.
- More than 1000 companies from across 36+ sectors will be participating in the Mela providing opportunities of being hired as an apprentice within companies.
- Individuals having the following can apply for an interview across these trades/opportunities:
 - a 5th–12th grade pass certificate,

- a skill training certificate,
- an ITI Diploma, or
- a graduate degree.
- The candidates will be given a choice of 500+ trades, including welders, electricians, housekeepers, beauticians, mechanics, and others.
- The primary goal of this programme is to encourage the hiring of apprentices from these cities.
- Also, this will provide assistance to employers in identifying and developing their potential through training and practical skillsets bringing value to their workplace.
- Candidates will also receive Apprenticeship certificates recognised by the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET).
- Participating organisations in the Melas have the opportunity to meet potential apprentices on a common platform and select candidates on the spot.



KAUSHAL BHARAT

SASHAKT BHARAT

PRADHAN MANTRI NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP MELA

Your opportunity to earn while you learn



200+
Locations



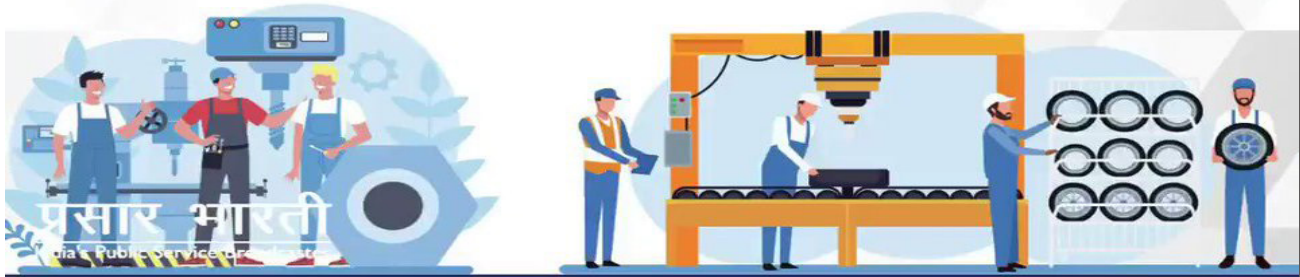
36+
Sectors



500+
Trades



1000+
Companies



- Furthermore, small-scale industries with at least four employees can hire apprentices at the event.
- A credit bank concept will also be introduced soon.

- This will be a depository of various credits accumulated by learners that can be used for future academic pathways.

Platform of Platforms (POP) under eNAM Launched

The Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare launched the Platform of Platforms (POP) under the National Agriculture Market (e-NAM).

- With the introduction of POP, farmers will be facilitated to sell the product outside their state borders.

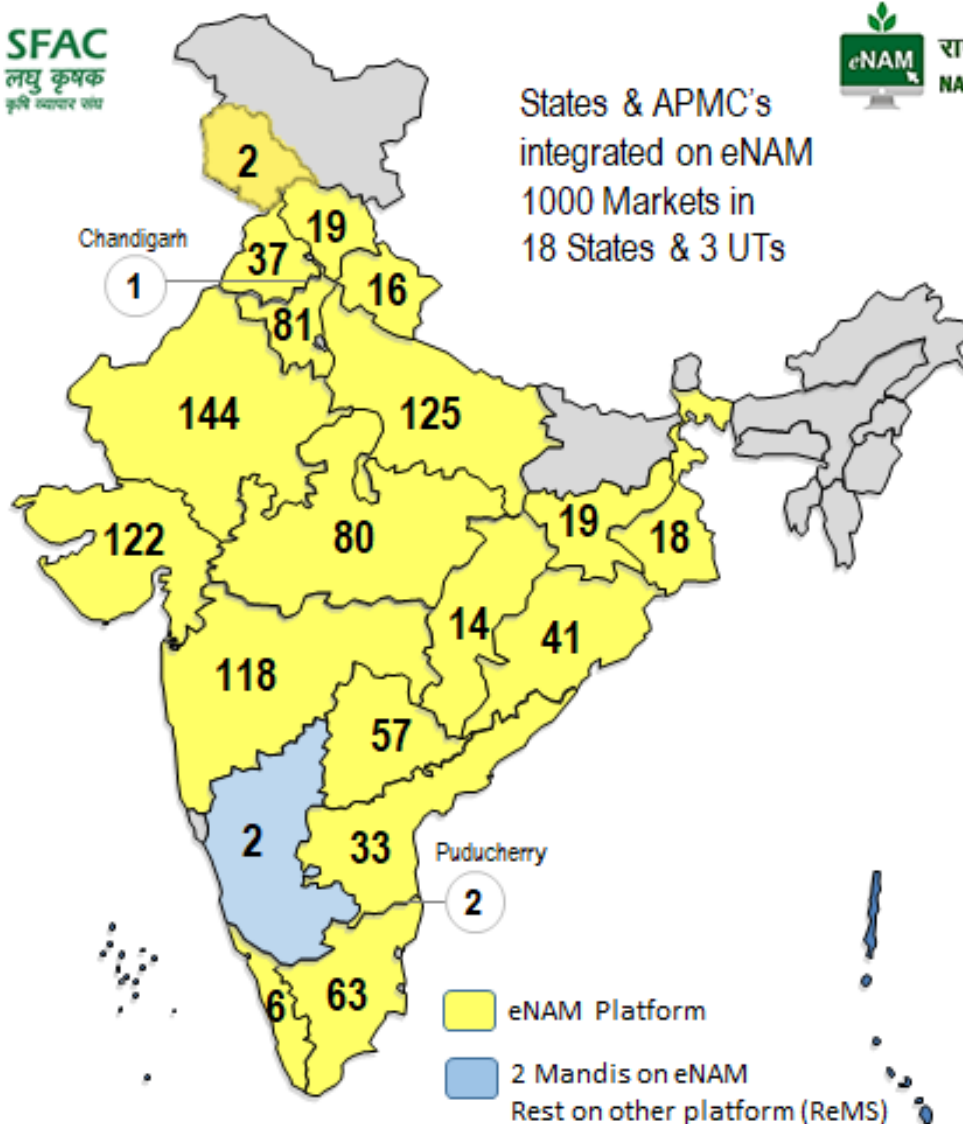
Key Points

- This will increase farmers' digital access to multiple markets, buyers and service providers.
- It will also help bring transparency in business transactions with the aim of improving price search mechanism and quality commensurate price realisation.
- 41 service providers from different platforms are covered under POP.
- Various value chain services are included like trading, quality checks, warehousing, fintech, market information, transportation etc.
- The PoP will create a digital ecosystem, which will benefit from the expertise of different platforms in different segments of the agricultural value chain.
- e-NAM integrates the platform of Service Providers as "Platform of Platforms".
- This integration includes:
 - Composite Service Providers (Service Providers who provide holistic services for trading of agricultural produce including quality analysis, trading, payment systems and logistics),
 - Logistics Service Provider,
 - Quality Assurance Service Provider,
 - Cleaning, Grading, Sorting & Packaging Service Provider,
 - Warehousing Facility Service Provider,
 - Agricultural Input Service Provider,
 - Technology Enabled Finance & Insurance Service Provider,
 - Information Dissemination Portal (Advisory Services, crop forecasting, weather updates, capacity building for farmers etc.) and
 - other platforms (e-commerce, international agri-business platforms, barter, private market platforms etc.).
- The inclusion of various service providers not only adds to the value of the e-NAM platform;
 - But also gives the users of the platform options to avail services from different service providers.
- It enables farmers, FPOs, traders and other stakeholders to access a wide variety of goods and services across the agricultural value chain through a single window.
- The POP can be accessed through e-NAM mobile app which can be downloaded from Google Play Store.

What is eNAM?

National Agriculture Market (eNAM) is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the existing APMC mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities.

- Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is the lead agency for implementing eNAM under the aegis of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- VISION: To promote uniformity in agriculture marketing-
 - By streamlining of procedures across the integrated markets,
 - By removing information asymmetry between buyers and sellers and
 - By promoting real time price discovery based on actual demand and supply.
- MISSION: Integration of APMCs across the country through a common online market platform-
 - to facilitate pan-India trade in agriculture commodities,
 - providing better price discovery through transparent auction process based on quality of produce along with timely online payment.



Horticulture Production

The Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare released the Second Advance Estimates of Area and Production of various Horticultural Crops for 2021-22.

- This is compiled on the basis of information received from States/ UTs and other Governmental source agencies.

Key Points

- Total Horticulture production in 2021-22 is estimated to be 341.63 Million Tonne, an increase of about 7.03 Million Tonne (increase of 2.10%) over 2020-21.
- Increase in production of Fruits, Vegetables and Honey.
 - And decrease in production of Spices, Flowers, Aromatics & Medicinal Plants and Plantation Crops over previous year, is envisaged.

Total Horticulture	2020-21 (Final)	2021-22 (1 st Adv. Est.)	2021-22 (2 nd Adv. Est.)
Area(in Million Ha)	27.48	27.56	27.74
Production(in Million Tonne)	334.60	333.25	341.63

Framework on The Right To Repair

Department of Consumer Affairs sets up committee to develop comprehensive framework on the Right to Repair.

- This has been done in a bid to emphasize on LiFE (Lifestyle for the Environment) movement through sustainable consumption.

Key Points

- The aim of developing a framework on right to repair in India is:
 - to empower consumers and product buyers in the local market,
 - harmonize trade between the original equipment manufacturers and the third-party buyers and sellers,
 - emphasize on developing sustainable consumption of products and
 - reduction in e-waste.
- Once it is rolled out in India, it will become a game-changer.
 - It will provide sustainability of the products.
 - Also serve as a catalyst for employment generation through Aatmanirbhar Bharat by allowing third-party repairs.

Issues Highlighted by the Committee

- The pertinent issues highlighted include that the companies avoid the publication of manuals that can help users make repairs easily.
- Manufacturers have proprietary control over spare parts (regarding the kind of design they use for screws and other).
- Monopoly on repair processes infringes the customer's "right to choose".
- Digital warranty cards, for instance, ensure that by getting a product from a "non-recognized" outfit, a customer loses the right to claim a warranty.
- Manufacturers are encouraging a culture of 'planned obsolescence'.
- This is a system whereby the design of any gadget is such that it lasts a particular time only.
 - And after that particular period it has to be mandatorily replaced.

Suggestions towards Solutions

- The tech companies should provide complete knowledge and access to manuals, schematics, and software updates.
- The parts and tools to service devices, including diagnostic tools should be made available to third parties, including individuals.
- The rationale behind the "Right to Repair" is that when we buy a product, it is inherent that we must own it completely.
 - For that to happen the consumers should be able to repair and modify the product with ease and at reasonable cost.
 - And that too without being captive to the whims of manufacturers for repairs.

Note: The right to repair has been recognized in many countries across the globe, including the U.S.A, U.K and European Union.

Mission Shakti

Ministry of Women and Child Development has issued detailed guidelines for 'Mission Shakti' scheme.

- Mission Shakti scheme will be implemented during the 15th Finance Commission period 2021-22 to 2025-26.

Key Points

The Government of India has launched 'Mission Shakti' - an integrated women empowerment programme as umbrella scheme for the safety, security and empowerment of women.



- 'Mission Shakti' is a scheme in mission mode aimed at strengthening interventions for women safety, security and empowerment.
- 'Mission Shakti' has two sub-schemes - 'Sambal' and 'Samarthya'.
- While the "Sambal" sub-scheme is for safety and security of women, the "Samarthya" sub-scheme is for empowerment of women.
- The components of 'Sambal' sub-scheme consist of erstwhile schemes such as:
 - One Stop Centre (OSC),
 - Women Helpline (WHL),
 - Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), and
 - A new component of Nari Adalats - women's collectives to promote and facilitate alternative dispute resolution and gender justice in society and within families.
- The components of 'Samarthya' sub-scheme consist of erstwhile schemes of:
 - Ujjwala,
 - Swadhar Greh and
 - Working Women Hostel have been included with modifications.
 - In addition, the existing schemes of National Creche Scheme for children of working mothers and
 - Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) under umbrella ICDS have now been included in Samarthya.
 - A new component of Gap Funding for Economic Empowerment has also been added in the Samarthya Scheme.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) – Annual Report

The fourth Annual Report is being brought out by NSO on the basis of Periodic Labour Force Survey conducted during July 2020-June 2021.

- These surveys cover an estimate of all important parameters of employment and unemployment in both usual status (ps+ss) and current weekly status (CWS).

आवधिक श्रमबल सर्वेक्षण (पीएलएफएस)

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

(जुलाई 2020 - जून 2021)

(JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021)



भारत सरकार

Government of India

सांख्यिकी और कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयन मंत्रालय

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

Key Points

- Before this, three Annual Reports covering both rural and urban areas giving estimates of all important parameters of employment and unemployment were released.
- These three Annual Reports were brought out on the basis of data collected in PLFS during July 2017- June 2018, July 2018-June 2019 and July 2019-June 2020.

Key Concepts

- Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):
 - LFPR is defined as the percentage of persons in labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.
- Worker Population Ratio (WPR):
 - WPR is defined as the percentage of employed persons in the population.
- Unemployment Rate (UR):
 - UR is defined as the percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force.
- Activity Status- Usual Status:
 - The activity status of a person is determined on the basis of the activities pursued by the person during the specified reference period.
 - When the activity status is determined on the basis of the reference period of last 365 days preceding the date of survey-
 - Then, it is known as the usual activity status of the person.
- Activity Status- Current Weekly Status (CWS):
 - The activity status determined on a reference period of last 7 days preceding the date of survey is known as the current weekly status (CWS) of the person.
- Principal activity status-
 - The activity status on which a person spent relatively long time (major time criterion) during 365 days preceding the date of survey.
- Subsidiary economic activity status-
 - The activity status in which a person in addition to his/her usual principal status, performs some economic activity for 30 days or more for the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey.

Some Important Findings:

- Percentage of the population of age 25 years and above with at least Secondary Education - 50.2%.
- Ratio of female of age 15 - 64 years in labour force in usual status (ps+ss) to persons of age 15 - 64 years in labour force in usual status (ps+ss) - 29.8%.
- Ratio of female workers to male workers in usual status (ps+ss) working as Legislators, senior officials and Managers- 22.2%.
- Ratio of female workers to male workers in usual status (ps+ss) working as Professionals and Technical Workers- 50.4%.
- Ratio of female workers to total workers in usual status (ps+ss) working in Managerial positions- 18.0 %.
- Percentage of female employed with advanced degree among total employed- 2.4%.
- Percentage of workers in usual status (ps+ss) in knowledge-intensive employment- 15.7%.
- Ratio of wage and salaried female workers in usual status (ps+ss) to wage and salaried male workers in usual status (ps+ss)- 0.9.
- Ratio of percentage of female of age between 15 - 64 years in labour force in usual status (ps+ss) to percentage of male under same condition- 0.4.

Migration in India, 2020-2021

The report, Migration in India, 2020-2021 contains estimates of the indicators based on information collected in PLFS during July 2020- June 2021.

Key Points

- The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) covers some additional information that was related to migration.
- These additional data were collected on the following aspects:
 - Information on migration particulars of the household members.
 - information on the temporary visitors in the household who arrived after March 2020 and
 - stayed in the household continuously for a period of 15 days or more but less than 6 months.

Key Concepts

- Usual Place of Residence (UPR):
 - Usual Place of Residence (UPR) of a person is the place (village/town) where the person has been staying continuously for at least six months.
 - Even if a person was not staying in the village/town continuously for six months but was found to be staying there during the survey with intention to stay there continuously for six months or more then that place was as his/her UPR.
- Migrant:
 - A household member whose last usual place of residence, any time in the past, was different from the present place of enumeration.
 - Such a person is considered as migrant member in a household.
- Migration rate:
 - Migration rate for any category of person (say, for rural or urban, male or female), is the percentage of migrants belonging to that category of persons.
- Temporary Visitors:
 - Temporary visitors in the household are those who arrived after March 2020 and stayed in the household continuously for a period of 15 days or more but less than 6 months.

Important Data

Category Of Persons	Rural	Urban	Rural+Urban
Male	5.9	22.5	10.7
Female	48.0	47.8	47.9

Male + Female	26.5	34.9	28.9
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- A total of 48.9 per cent of the temporary visitors moved to meet family/relatives/friends between July 2020 to June 2021.
 - 15.7 per cent of such temporary visitors moved for health related reasons.
 - 12.2 of temporary visitors per cent moved due to loss of job/closure of unit/lack of employment opportunities
- 0.7 per cent of the country's population was recorded as a 'temporary visitor' across households.
 - i.e. 85 lakh 'temporary visitors' in the households.
- The all-India migration rate was 28.9 per cent for July 2020-June 2021, with 26.5 percent migration rate in rural areas and 34.9 per cent in urban areas.
- Females recorded a higher share of migration rate of 47.9 per cent, with 48 per cent in rural areas and 47.8 per cent in urban areas.
- The migration rate for males was seen at 10.7 per cent, with 5.9 per cent in rural areas and 22.5 per cent in urban areas.
- Among females, the highest level of migration rate was seen at 86.8 per cent for marriage, while 49.6 per cent of the males migrated in search of employment.
- 9.2 per cent persons migrated due to migration of parent/earning member of the family, with 17.5 per cent males and 7.3 per cent females migrating for this reason.

Department Of Consumer Affairs Launches 'Jagriti'

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) has launched "Jagriti", a mascot for empowering consumers and generating awareness of their rights.



उपभोक्ता मामले विभाग
भारत सरकार



- Jagriti will be projected as an empowered consumer who is spreading awareness about consumer rights & addressing solutions to the problem.

Key Points

- The "Jagriti" mascot will be used to generate consumer awareness about various themes of the Department.
- These themes will include matters such as:
 - Provisions of Consumer Protection Act 2019,
 - Hallmarking,
 - National Consumer Helpline toll free number 1915,
 - Provisions of weights & measures Act,
 - Decisions of the Central Consumer Protection Authority and
 - Testimonials by consumers on grievance redressal.
- By bringing the Jagriti Mascot, DoCA aims to strengthen its consumer awareness campaign presence in digital world also.
- Jagriti mascot shall be shown along with tagline "Jago Grahak Jago" in all its media campaigns



India Rankings 2022 of Higher Educational Institutes

The Union Minister Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship released the India Rankings 2022.

- A robust and objective framework for assessment, accreditation and ranking will play a major role in enhancing quality in the higher education ecosystem.

Key Points



Some of the highlights of the ranking system and some possible changes:

- Accreditation and assessment shall be mandatory, and every Higher Education Institution need to be accredited.
 - Self-declaration and transparency shall be basis of assessment and accreditation.
- All the institutions shall also be part of NIRF ranking system.
- By next year the education ministry will unify institutional accreditation presently done by NAAC and programme accreditation presently being done by NBA.
 - Ranking on Innovation done earlier by AICTE will henceforth integrated with NIRF.
- From next year NIRF ranking categories will also include Innovation and Entrepreneurship.
- There is already work going on rankings of ITIs and Polytechnics.
- Soon there will be a system where each school is also accredited.
- Accreditation and rankings system will also become international and invite foreign institutions to be a part of it.

Five Broad Categories of Parameters and Weightage

Five broad categories of parameters identified in the NIRF and their weightage on scale of 10 are given below:

Sl. No.	Parameter	Marks	Weightage
1.	Teaching, Learning & Resources	100	0.30
2.	Research and Professional Practice	100	0.30
3.	Graduation Outcomes	100	0.20
4.	Outreach and Inclusivity	100	0.10
5.	Perception	100	0.10

- Each of these five parameters have 2 to 5 sub-parameters.
- A total number of 18 – 21 sub-parameters are used for ranking of HEIs in different categories and subject domains.

Key Highlights of the Rankings

- Indian Institute of Technology Madras retains its 1st position in Overall Category for fourth consecutive year and in Engineering for seventh consecutive year.

- Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru tops the Universities Category for seventh consecutive year.
 - It stood first in Research Institutions Category for second consecutive year.
- IIM Ahmedabad tops in Management subject retaining its first position for third consecutive year.
- All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi occupies the top slot in Medical for the fifth consecutive year.
- Moreover, AIIMS is ranked at 9th position in Overall category for the first time.
- Jamia Hamdard tops the ranking in Pharmacy for fourth consecutive year.
- Miranda House retains the 1st position amongst Colleges for the sixth consecutive year.
- National Law School of India University, Bengaluru retains its first position in Law for the fifth consecutive year.

National E-Governance Service Delivery Assessment

A National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment was conducted by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).

- This is a periodic assessment intended to improve the effectiveness of States/Union Territories and the Central Government in delivery of their online services to citizens.

Key Points

- All Government portals that were evaluated were divided into two main categories-
 - States/Union Territories/Central Ministry portal
 - State/Union Territory/ Central Ministry Services Portals.
- There were four main parameters of assessment:-
 - Accessibility
 - Content Availability
 - Ease of Use and Information Security
 - Privacy for Central Ministry Portals
- An additional three parameters were also used for the Central Ministry Services Portals - End Service Delivery, Integrated Service Delivery and Status and Request Tracking.
- The website of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has been ranked at 1 under the Central Ministries Portal.
- The Digital Police Portal has been placed at 2 under the Central Ministry Services Portal.

About Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)



सत्यमेव जयते

प्रशासनिक सुधार और लोक शिकायत विभाग

**DEPARTMENT OF
ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS &
PUBLIC GRIEVANCES**

- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAR&PG) is the nodal agency of the Government of India for administrative reforms.
- Hence, they work for redressal of public grievances relating to the States in general and grievances pertaining to Central Government agencies in particular.
- The Department also undertakes activities in the field of international exchange and cooperation to promote public service reforms.
- The DAR&PG is under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and is headed by Secretary.

UNESCO's Recognition To eVIDYA

UNESCO recognises India's use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) under PM eVIDYA scheme in school education.

- The Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) has been conferred the UNESCO's King Hamid Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize, for the 2021 edition.

Key Points

- This award recognizes innovative approaches in leveraging new technologies to expand educational and lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- It is also in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goal 4 on Education.
- It was established in 2005 with the support of the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- The Prize rewards individuals and organizations that are implementing outstanding projects and promoting the creative use of technologies:-
 - To enhance learning, teaching and overall educational performance in the digital age.

About PM eVIDYA

- PM eVIDYA has been launched under the One Nation One Digital Platform to reduce the loss of education of children in times of coronavirus infection.
- It has been initiated as part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan by the Ministry of Education in May 2020.
- It unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access for imparting education by using technology to minimise learning losses.
- One of the major initiatives of PM eVidya is 12 eVidya TV Channels based on the line – 'One Class-One Channel' for classes 1 to 12.
 - The channels air educational content related to the respective classes.
 - 12 eVidya DTH channels are especially useful for the learners of those remote areas where stable internet is not available.
 - These channels telecast curriculum-based educational content developed by NCERT and other agencies such as CBSE, KVS, NIOS, Rotary, etc.
- The PM eVidya program will be expanded by the government under one class one TV program from 12 to 200 TV.
- In addition, there will be 750 virtual labs and 75 skill labs in Science and math.





- > Will enable digital/online/on-air access to education
- > Will benefit more than 25 Crore school going children
- > DIKSHA : Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing
- > SWAYAM online courses in MOOCS format for school and higher education
- > One earmarked TV channel per class from 1 to 12
- > Extensive use of Radio, Community radio and CBSE Podcast - Shiksha Vani
- > Special e-content for visually and hearing impaired

- For visually and hearing impaired students the government will also do radio podcasts.
- The PM eVidya program will include 'Diksha' an e-content and QR coded energetic book.
- It is envisioned as a one-stop solution for all learning needs of students

Note: CIET is a constituent unit of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) under Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India.

20th Folk Fair and 13th Krishi Fair

Minister of State for Tribal Affairs and Jal Shakti, inaugurated the 20th Folk Fair and 13th Krishi Fair 2022 at Saradhabali in Puri, Odisha.

- The two fairs are aimed at preserving tribal culture and promoting innovation in agriculture.

Key Points

- The objective of the 20th Folk Fair 2022 is to emphasize the importance of tribal culture and establish its originality and uniqueness.
- Through the fair, attempts are being made to help the groups and individuals from the tribal communities to showcase their talents in the preserve their culture.
- The 13th Krishi Fair is a platform for all organisations and companies with innovations, products, solutions and services related to agriculture.
- The exhibition has representatives from the entire spectrum of agriculture and allied industry.
 - The representatives include manufacturers, dealers, traders, exporters and consultants in agriculture, floriculture, aquaculture, sericulture and more.



National Initiative for Promotion of Upskilling of Nirman workers (NIPUN)

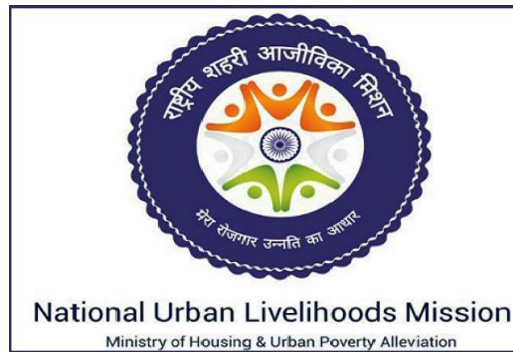
Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs and Petroleum & Natural Gas, launched an innovative project for skill training of construction workers called 'NIPUN'.

- The project NIPUN is an initiative of MoHUA under its flagship scheme of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM).

Key Points

- The objective is to train over 1 lakh construction workers, through fresh skilling and upskilling programmes.
 - And provides them with work opportunities in foreign countries also.
- This initiative will enable Nirman workers to be more proficient and skilled while making them adopt future trends in the construction industry.

About DAY-NULM



- Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY) is an aim to uplift the urban poor folks by enhancing sustainable livelihood opportunities through skill development.
- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation had been implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) since 1997.
- This scheme was restructured as Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission in September, 2013.
- Mission Objective: To reduce poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households by achieving following:
 - Enabling them to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities,
 - Leading to an appreciable improvement in their livelihoods on a sustainable basis, through building strong grassroots level.
 - To providing the shelter equipped with essential services to the urban homeless in a phased manner.
 - To address the livelihood concern of the urban street vendors by facilitating with suitable space, institutional credit, and social security.
 - To provide skills to the urban street vendor for accessing emerging market opportunities.
- Component of DAY-NULM: The scheme has two component one for urban India and other for rural India.
 - The Urban component named as Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana will be implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.
 - The rural component named as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana will be implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development.
- The core belief of National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) is that the poor are entrepreneurial and have innate desire to come out of poverty.
 - The challenge is to unleash their capabilities to generate meaningful and sustainable livelihoods.

One Nation One Ration Card

Assam has become the 36th State/UT to implement One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC).

- With this, the ONORC plan is successfully implemented in all the 36 states/UTs, making food security portable throughout the country.

Key Points

- Since its inception in August 2019, about 71 Crore portable transactions (43.6 crore NFSA and 27.8 crore PM-GKAY transactions) have taken place under ONORC.
- This has led to delivering foodgrains equivalent to about Rs. 40,000 Crore in food subsidy through portability.
- Additionally, as a key indicator, presently a monthly average of about 3 Crore portable transactions are being recorded.

About ONORC

- The ONORC scheme is being implemented by the Department for the nation-wide portability of ration cards under National Food Security Act (NFSA).

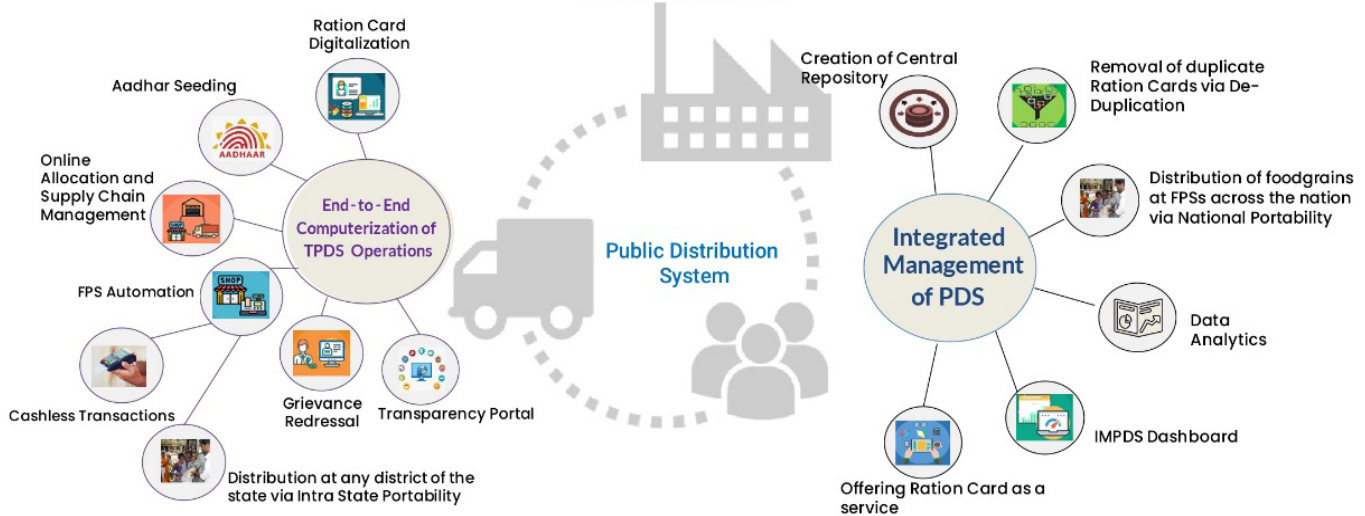
- Through this all eligible ration card holders/beneficiaries covered under NFSA can access their entitlements from anywhere in the country.
- This system allows all NFSA beneficiaries, particularly migrant beneficiaries, to claim either full or part foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) in the country.
- This can be done through existing ration card with biometric/Aadhaar authentication in a seamless manner.
- The system also allows their family members back home, if any, to claim the balance foodgrains on same the ration card.
- Another dimension under ONORC plan is the 'MERA RATION' mobile application which has been rolled out to take maximum advantage of the ONORC plan.
- The mobile app is providing a host of useful real time information to the beneficiaries and is available in 13 languages.



One Nation One Ration Card

Journey from State-wise E2E Computerization

<https://nfsa.gov.in/>



Regulations for Bharat New Car Assessment Programme

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has approved the draft notification to introduce Bharat NCAP (New Car Assessment Programme).

- This has been done by inserting a new rule 126E in CMVR (Central Motor Vehicles Rules), 1989.

Key Points

- Bharat NCAP will be rolled out from 1st April 2023.
- Applicability: It is applicable on motor vehicles of category M1.
 - That is such motor vehicles used for the carriage of passengers, comprising not more than eight seats, in addition to driver's seat,
 - With gross vehicle weight less than 3.5 Tonnes,
 - Manufactured or imported in the country, in accordance with the Automotive Industry Standard (AIS)-197, as amended from time to time.
- Bharat NCAP rating will provide consumers an indication of the level of protection offered to occupants. This will be done by evaluating the vehicle in the following areas:
 - (a) Adult Occupant Protection (AOP)
 - (b) Child Occupant Protection (COP) and
 - (c) Safety Assist Technologies (SAT).
- The vehicle shall be assigned a star rating from one to five stars, based on scoring against various tests undertaken as per AIS 197.
- Bharat NCAP introduces the concept of safety rating of passenger cars and empowers consumers to

take informed decisions.

- It will promote export worthiness of the cars produced in the country and increase the domestic customer's confidence in these vehicles.
- Additionally the program will encourage manufacturers to provide advanced safety technologies to earn higher ratings.

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illegal Trafficking

By resolution 42/112 of 7 December 1987, the General Assembly decided to observe 26 June as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.



- It is an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse.

Key Points

- This year the theme is “Addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crises”.
- The motive is to fight off misinformation by sharing facts and by providing methods of treatment, prevention and care.
- The focus is to create awareness about the hazardous impacts of drug abuse on the society and to create a world without it.

Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D)

The Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of Education released the Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D) for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

- It assesses the performance of school education system at the District level by creating an index for comprehensive analysis.

Key Points

- The Indian Education System is one of the largest in the world.
 - It has about 15 lakh schools, 97 lakh teachers, and nearly 26 crore students from varied socio-economic backgrounds.
- DoSE&L devised Performance Grading Index (PGI) for States and released report for the reference years 2017-18 to 2019-20.
- Based on the success of State PGI, 83-indicator based PGI for District (PGI-D) has been designed to grade the performance of all districts in school education.
- The data is filled by districts through online portal.
- The PGI-D is expected to help the state education departments to identify gaps at the district level

and improve their performance in a decentralized manner.

- The indicator-wise PGI score shows the areas where a district needs to improve.
- The PGI-D structure comprises of total weight age of 600 points across 83 indicators.
- These indicators are grouped under 6 categories:
 - Outcomes,
 - Effective Classroom Transaction,
 - Infrastructure Facilities & Student's Entitlements,
 - School Safety & Child Protection,
 - Digital Learning and
 - Governance Process.
- These categories are further divided into 12 domains.
- PGI-D grades the districts into ten grades.
 - Highest achievable Grade is Daksh, which is for Districts scoring more than 90% of the total points in that category or overall.
 - The lowest grade in PGI-D is called Akanshi-3 which is for scores upto 10% of the total points.

Report on India's Gig and Platform Economy

NITI Aayog launched a report titled 'India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy'.

- The report is a first-of-its-kind study that presents comprehensive perspectives and recommendations on the gig-platform economy in India.

Key Points

- The report provides a scientific methodological approach to estimate the current size and job-generation potential of the sector.
- It highlights the opportunities and challenges of the emerging sector.
- It also presents global best practices for social security and job creation for different categories of workers in the sector.

Key Highlights from the Report

- The report estimates that in 2020–21, 77 lakh (7.7 million) workers were engaged in the gig economy.
- They constituted 2.6% of the non-agricultural workforce or 1.5% of the total workforce in India.
- The gig workforce is expected to expand to 2.35 crore (23.5 million) workers by 2029–30.
- Gig workers are expected to form 6.7% of the non-agricultural workforce or 4.1% of the total livelihood in India by 2029–30.
- At present, about 47% of the gig work is in medium skilled jobs, about 22% in high skilled, and about 31% in low skilled jobs.
- Female labour force participation in India has remained low, oscillating between 16 per cent to 23 per cent in the last few years.
- Similarly, persons with disabilities, who make up for 2.11 per cent of India's population, have a labour force participation rate of 36 per cent.
- Trend shows the concentration of workers in medium skills is gradually declining and that of the low skilled and high skilled is increasing.

Important Recommendations

- To harness the potential of the gig-platform sector, the report recommends accelerating access to finance through products specifically designed for platform workers.
- Fiscal incentives such as tax-breaks or startup grants may be provided for businesses.
- The report also recommended extending social security measures such as income support, paid sick

leaves, insurance and pension plans.

- Such plans and policies may be uniquely designed by a firm, in partnership with insurance companies.
 - It could also be offered in collaboration with the government, as envisaged under the Code on Social Security, 2020.



What is Gig Economy?

In a gig economy, temporary, flexible jobs are commonplace and companies tend to hire independent contractors and freelancers instead of full-time employees.

- Simply put, the positions are temporary to meet the company's requirements by having short-term engagements.
- The gig economy has various driving factors including work flexibility and the choice to work remotely from anywhere in the world.
- Further, the gig workers work on the fixed-fee (while doing a contract) model, time & effort model etc.
- Start-up culture has also promoted the idea of freelancing and contractual work.
- The problem with this kind of employment is the lack of social security, working conditions and working rights etc.

It is largely unregulated which results in less job security and nominal benefits.

India-EU Trade and Investment Agreements

India and the European Union concluded the first round of negotiations for India-EU Trade and Investment Agreements.

- The second round of negotiations is scheduled to take place in September 2022 at Brussels.

About India-EU Bilateral Trade

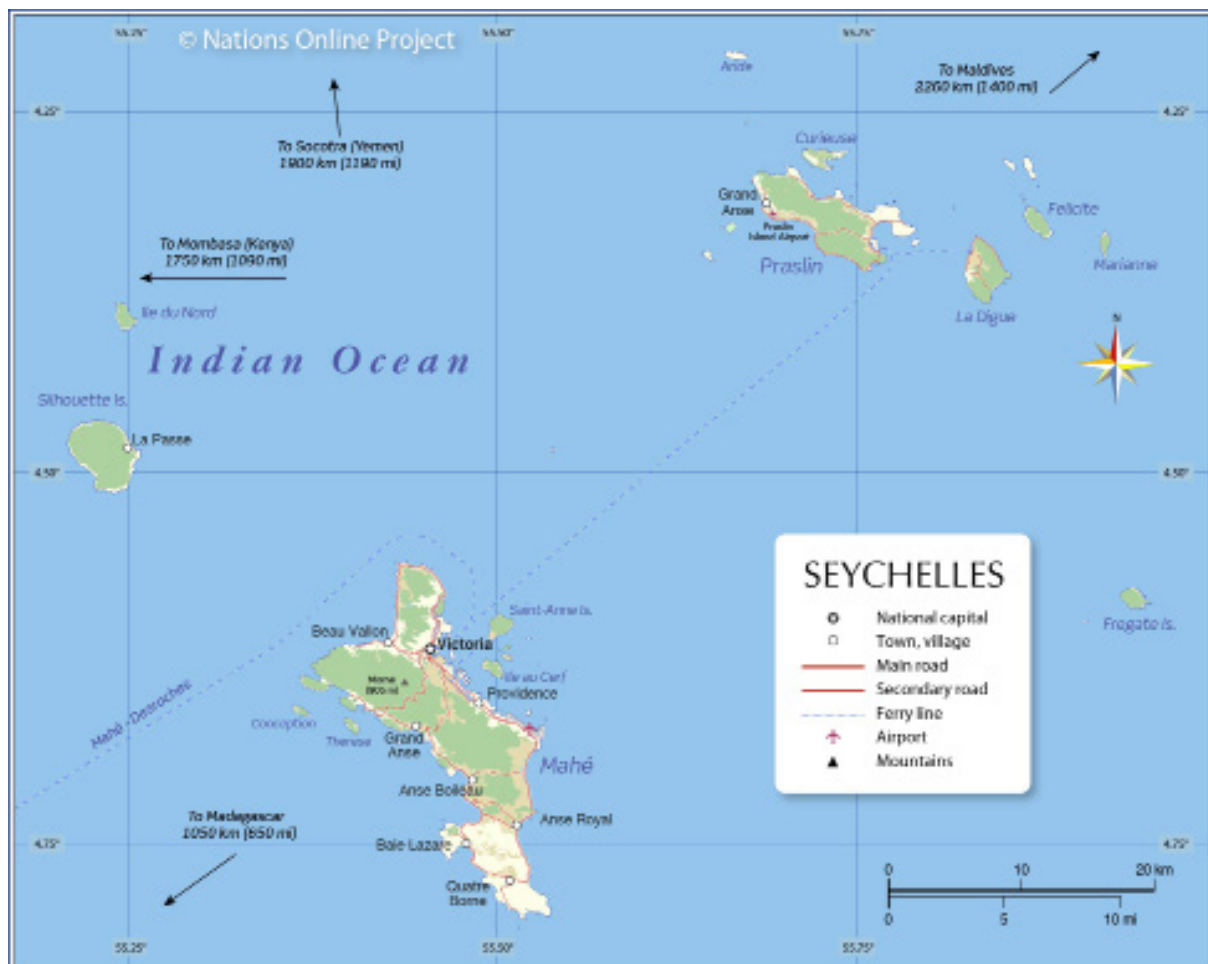
- India's bilateral trade with EU amounted to USD 116.36 billion in 2021-22.
- Despite the global disruptions, the bilateral trade achieved an impressive annual growth of 43.5% in 2021-22.
- Currently EU is India's second largest trading partner after US, and the second largest destination for Indian exports.

India's Participation in Seychelles Independence Day

The Indian Navy contingent joined the personnel of the Seychelles Defence Force (SDF) and the citizens of Republic of Seychelles for the Independence Day celebrations.

- INS Kolkata, an indigenously built Stealth Guided Missile Destroyer of the Indian Navy, was deployed to Port Victoria, Seychelles.

About Seychelles



- The Seychelles consist of an archipelago of about 100 islands in the Indian Ocean northeast of Madagascar.
- The principal islands are Mahé, Praslin, and La Digue.
- Capital and largest city (2011 est.): Victoria
- Monetary unit: Seychelles rupee
- Languages: Seychellois Creole (official) 89.1%, English (official) 5.1%, French (official) 0.7%, and other 3.8%.
- Ethnicity/race: mixed French, African, Indian, Chinese, and Arab.

38th India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol

The 38th India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and Indonesian Navy was conducted in the Andaman Sea and Straits of Malacca.

- The 38th CORPAT is the first post pandemic Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) between the two countries.
- The two Navies have been carrying out CORPAT along their International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) since 2002.
- This has helped build understanding and interoperability between both the Navies.
- It has also facilitated measures to prevent and suppress Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking, maritime terrorism, etc.
- As part of Government of India's vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region)-
 - Naval Component under the aegis of HQANC (Andaman & Nicobar Command) undertakes coordinated patrols with other littoral countries of the Andaman Sea.

I2U2 summit

Prime Minister of India participated in the first-ever I2U2 Virtual Summit along with the heads of state of Israel, the UAE, and the US.

- The grouping was first mentioned in October last year by a senior US official.

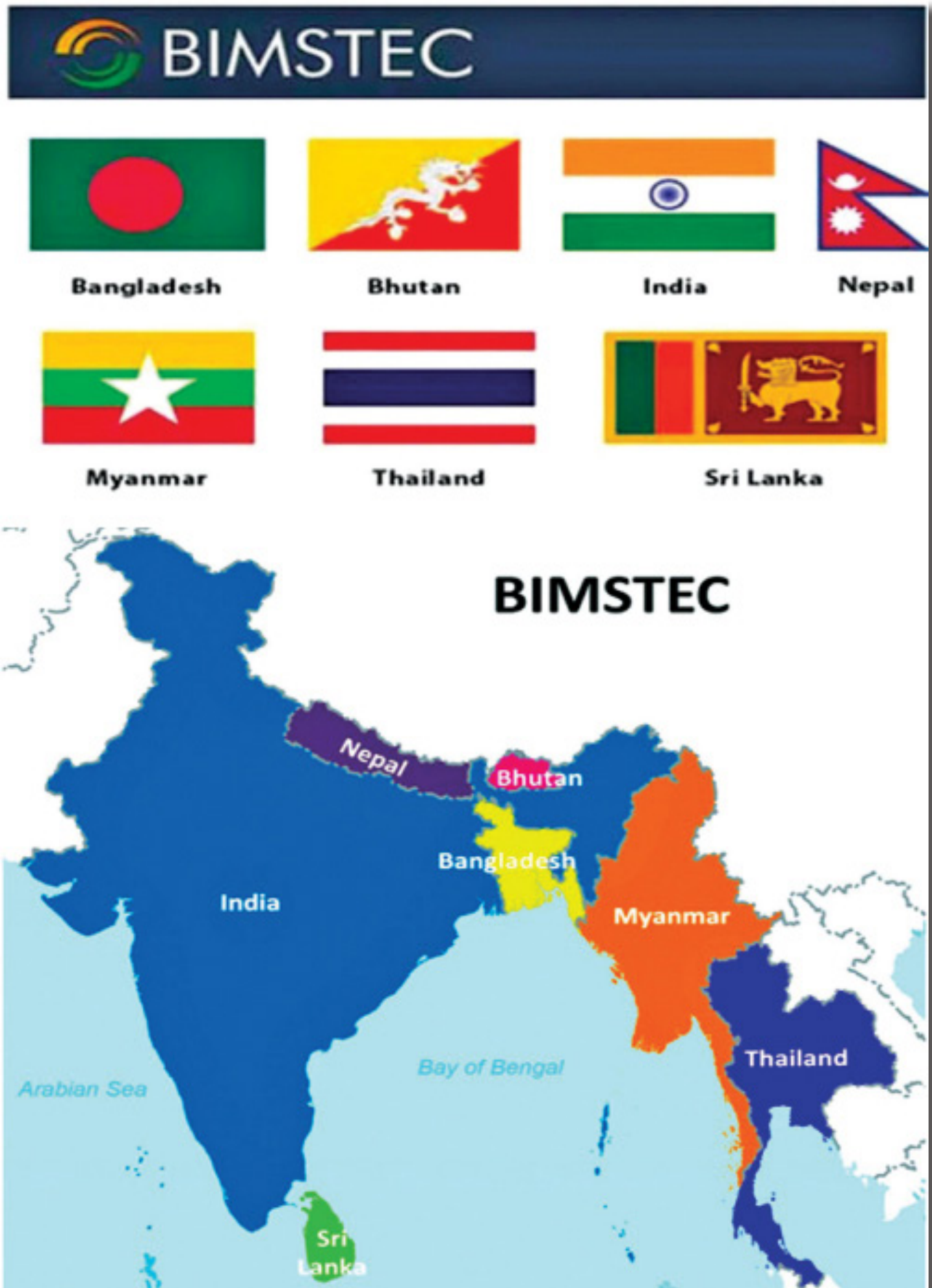
Key Points

- I2U2 stands for India, Israel, the UAE, and the US, and was also referred to as the 'West Asian Quad' by Ahmed Albanna, Ambassador of the UAE to India.
- Its stated aim is to discuss "common areas of mutual interest, to strengthen the economic partnership in trade and investment in our respective regions and beyond".
- Six areas of cooperation have been identified by the countries mutually.
 - They are water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security.
- The United Arab Emirates also announced an investment of USD 2 billion to develop a series of integrated food parks across India.
 - Objective of the investment will be to help tackle food insecurity in South Asia and the Middle East.
- These integrated food parks will incorporate state-of-the-art climate-smart technologies to reduce food waste and spoilage, conserve fresh water, and employ renewable energy sources.
- The I2U2 group will also advance a hybrid renewable energy project in Gujarat.
 - The project will consist of 300 megawatts (MW) of wind and solar capacity, complemented by a battery energy storage system.

BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Centre at Colombo

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister has approved a Memorandum of Association (MoA) by India for establishment of Technology Transfer Facility (TTF).

- The TTF is under BIMSTEC and was approved by the BIMSTEC member countries at the 5th BIMSTEC Summit held at Colombo, Sri Lanka.



Key Points

- The main objectives of the BIMSTEC TTF are to coordinate, facilitate and strengthen cooperation in technology transfer among the BIMSTEC Member States.
 - This shall be done by promoting the transfer of technologies, sharing of experiences and capacity building.
- The following are priority areas for technology transfer:
 - Biotechnology, Nanotechnology,
 - Information and Communication Technology,
 - Space technology applications,
 - Agricultural technology,
 - Pharmaceutical technology automation,
 - New and renewable energy technology automation,
 - Oceanography,
 - Nuclear Technology Applications,
 - E-waste and solid waste management technology,
 - Health Technologies,
 - Technologies pertinent to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.
- The TTF shall have a Governing Board and the overall control of activities of the TTF shall be vested in the Governing Board.
 - The Governing Board shall consist of one nominee from each Member State.

About BIMSTEC

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization.
- It comprises of seven Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity.
- This sub-regional organization came into being on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.
- It constitutes seven Member States:
 - five deriving from South Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and
 - two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand.
- Initially, the economic bloc was formed with four Member States with the acronym 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- Following the inclusion of Myanmar in 1997 during a special Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok, the Group was renamed 'BIMST-EC'.
 - (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- With the admission of Nepal and Bhutan at the 6th Ministerial Meeting (2004, Thailand), the name of the grouping was changed to BIMSCTEC.
 - 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC).
- The regional group constitutes a bridge between South and South East Asia and represents a reinforcement of relations among these countries.
- BIMSTEC has also established a platform for intra-regional cooperation between SAARC and ASEAN members.
- The BIMSTEC region is home to around 1.5 billion people which constitute around 22% of the global population.
- In the last five years, BIMSTEC Member States have been able to sustain an average 6.5% economic growth trajectory despite global financial meltdown.

14th BRICS Summit

Prime Minister of India participated in the 14th BRICS Summit, convened under the Chairmanship of President Xi Jinping of China.

- President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, President Vladimir Putin of Russia, and President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa also participated in the Summit.

Key Points

- The theme of the summit is “Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development”.
- The heads of the states raised concerns over the humanitarian situation in and around Ukraine.
- The BRICS Initiative on Denial of Safe Haven to Corruption aims to further strengthen anti-corruption capacity building.
- BRICS Framework for Consumer Protection in E-commerce was also discussed.
- The summit also expressed concern over the serious drug situation in the world.

About BRICS



- BRICS is an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
- Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC (without South Africa) in 2001.
- The leaders of BRIC countries met for the first time in St. Petersburg, Russia, on the margins of G8 Outreach Summit in July 2006.
- After a series of high level meetings, the 1st BRIC summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia on 16 June 2009.
- BRIC group was renamed as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) in September 2010.
 - This was after South Africa was accepted as a full member at the BRIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in New York
- BRICS member countries comprise of 41% of the world population, having 24% of the world GDP and over 16% share in the world trade.

G7 Summit

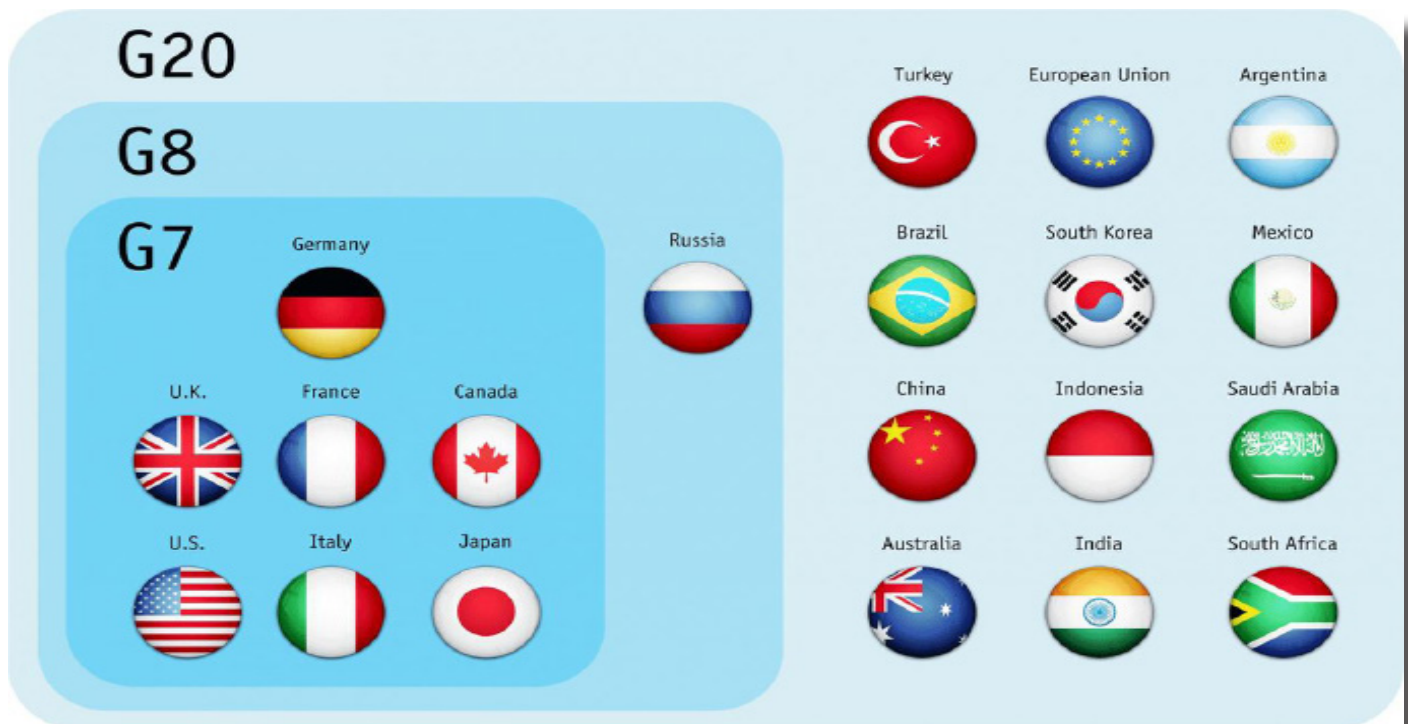
Prime Minister of India is in Germany to attend the Group of Seven (G7) Summit at Schloss Elmau, Germany.

- Germany holds the presidency of the G7 in 2022.

Key Points

- The G7 is an informal forum of leading industrialised nations, which include Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- Representatives of the European Union are always present at the annual meeting of the heads of state and government of the G7.
- German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has invited India, along with Argentina, Indonesia, Senegal, and South Africa to the 2022 Summit as partner countries.
- A number of international organisations such as WHO, WTO and the IMF also participated.

About G6, G7, G8



- The first “World Economic Summit”, which later became the G7, was launched in 1975 by former French President.
- The heads of state and government of Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan and the US — a Group of Six — met in France.
- The participants exchanged ideas on the economic problems of the 1970s.
- In 1976, Canada was added to the group, and the first G7 met in Puerto Rico.
- In the 1980s, the interest of the G7 expanded to include foreign and security policy issues.
- Then Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev was invited to talks on the sidelines of the London Summit in 1991.
- In 1998, the Group of Eight was constituted as Russia became a member.
- Russia was removed from the group after its violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity in 2014. Hence, the current form of G7.
- Germany has the G7 presidency for the seventh time this year.
- Japan will be president in 2023.
- As of 2022, G7 countries make up 10% of the world’s population, 31% of global GDP, and 21% of global carbon dioxide emissions.
- China and India, the two most populous countries with among the largest GDP figures in the world, are not part of the grouping.

Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator

Maiden flight of the Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator was carried out successfully by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

- The flying test was done from the Aeronautical Test Range, Chitradurga, Karnataka.

Key Points

- Operating in a fully autonomous mode, the aircraft exhibited a perfect flight, including take-off, way point navigation and a smooth touchdown.
- This flight marks a major milestone in terms of proving critical technologies towards the development of future unmanned aircraft.
- This is also a significant step towards self-reliance in such strategic defence technologies.
- The Unmanned Aerial Vehicle is designed & developed by Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), Bengaluru.
 - It is a premier research laboratory of DRDO.
- It is powered by a small turbofan engine.
- The airframe, undercarriage and entire flight control and avionics systems used for the aircraft were developed indigenously.

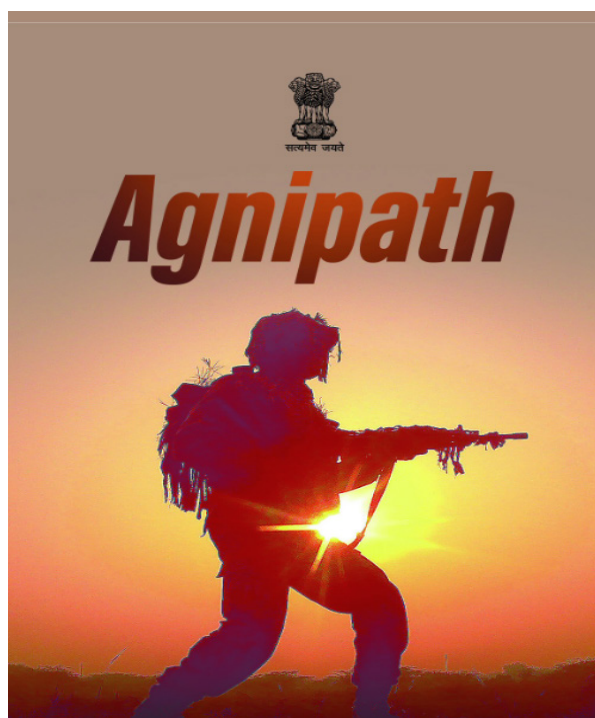


AGNIPATH Scheme

The Union Cabinet has approved an attractive recruitment scheme for Indian youth to serve in the Armed Forces.

- The scheme is called AGNIPATH and the youth selected under this scheme will be known as Ag-niveers.

Key Points



Agnipath Scheme

Key Features

- **Opportunity** to serve the Nation as Agniveers through enrolment in the Armed Forces
- **Pan India** merit based recruitment
- **Four years** tenure
- Attractive monthly emoluments & handsome "Seva Nidhi" package
- **Opportunity** to apply for enrolment in permanent cadre
- Based on merit and organisational requirement, upto 25% Agniveers **selected through central, transparent, rigorous system** after four years

- The AGNIPATH Scheme has been designed to enable a youthful profile of the Armed Forces.
- It will provide an opportunity to the youth who may be keen to don the uniform.
- These young bloods are expected to be more in tune with contemporary technological trends.
- It is envisaged that average age profile of Indian Armed forces would come down by about 4-5 years by implementation of this scheme.

Benefits to the Agniveers

- Agniveers will be given an attractive customised monthly package along with Risk and Hardship allowances as applicable in the three services.
- On completion of the engagement period of four years, Agniveers will be paid one time 'Seva Nidhi' package.
 - The package shall comprise of their contribution including accrued interest thereon and matching contribution from the Government.

Year	Customised Package (Monthly)	In Hand (70%)	Contribution to Agniveer Corpus Fund (30%)	Contribution to corpus fund by Gol
All figures in Rs (Monthly Contribution)				
1st Year	30000	21000	9000	9000
2nd Year	33000	23100	9900	9900
3rd Year	36500	25580	10950	10950
4th Year	40000	28000	12000	12000
Total contribution in Agniveer Corpus Fund after four years			Rs 5.02 Lakh	Rs 5.02 Lakh
Exit After 4 Year			Rs 11.71 Lakh as Seva Nidhi Package (Including, interest accumulated on the above amount as per the applicable interest rates would also be paid)	

- The 'Seva Nidhi' will be exempt from Income Tax.
- There shall be no entitlement to gratuity and pensionary benefits.
- Agniveers will be provided non-contributory Life Insurance Cover of Rs 48 lakhs for the duration of their engagement period in the Indian Armed Forces.
- During this period of service to the nation, the Agniveers will be imparted with various military skills and experience.
 - The process will also inculcate discipline, physical fitness, leadership qualities, courage and patriotism.
- Post this stint of four years, the Agniveers will be infused into the civil society where they can contribute immensely towards the nation building process.
- The skills gained by each Agniveer will be recognised in a certificate to form part of his unique resume.
- Moreover, the Seva Nidhi of approximately Rs 11.71 lakhs would aid the Agniveer to pursue his/her future dreams without the financial pressure.
- The individuals, selected for enrolment in the Armed Forces as regular cadre, would be required to serve for a further engagement period of minimum 15 years
 - They would be governed by the existing terms and conditions of service of Junior Commissioned Officers/Other Ranks in Indian Army.

FINANCIAL PACKAGE

Composite Annual Package

1st year package -approx. ₹ 4.76 Lacs

Upgradation upto approx.
₹ 6.92 Lacs in 4th year

Allowances

Risk & Hardship, Ration, Dress, Travel allowances as applicable

Seva Nidhi

30% of monthly emoluments to be contributed by individuals

Equal amount matched & contributed by the Government

Corpus of approx. ₹ 11.71 Lacs after four years, exempted from Income Tax

Death Compensation

Non-contributory life insurance cover of ₹ 48 Lakhs

Additional Ex Gratia of ₹ 44 Lakhs for death attributable to service

Pay for unserved portion upto four years including 'Seva Nidhi' component

Disability Compensation

Compensation based on % disability laid down by medical authorities

One time ex-gratia of ₹ 44/ 25/ 15 Lacs for 100%/ 75%/ 50% disability, respectively

Other Important Points

- Under the AGNIPATH scheme, the Agniveers will be enrolled in the Forces under respective Service Acts for a period of four years.
- They would form a distinct rank in the Armed Forces, different from any other existing ranks.
- Upon the completion of four years of service, Agniveers will be offered an opportunity to apply for permanent enrolment in the Armed Forces.
- These applications will be considered in a centralised manner based on objective criteria including performance during their four-year engagement period.
- After that, 25% of each specific batch of Agniveers will be enrolled in regular cadre of the Armed Forces.
- Enrolment will be based on 'All India All Class' basis and the eligible age will be in range from 17.5 to 21 years.

Note: The Government has decided that a one-time waiver shall be granted for the proposed recruitment cycle for 2022.

- Accordingly, the upper age limit for the recruitment process for Agnipath scheme for 2022 is increased to 23 years.
- This has been done taking cognizance of the fact that it has not been possible to undertake the recruitment during the last two years

ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute

The Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare recently inaugurated the centenary year celebrations of the National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI), Karnal (Haryana).

About ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute

ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) at Karnal, Haryana is one of the premier Institutes in dairy sector.

- NDRI's lineage goes back to the Imperial Institute for Animal Husbandry & Dairying which was set up in Bangalore in 1923.
- Mahatma Gandhi and 'Bharat Ratna' Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, were imparted training at the Institute in 1927.
 - Both of them wanted to get acquainted with modern methods of cattle management.
- It was expanded and renamed as Imperial Dairy Institute in 1936 and was known as National Dairy Research Institute after independence in 1947.
- Upon shifting of the Institute Head Quarters to Karnal in 1955, the establishment at Bengaluru continued as the Southern Regional Station of NDRI.
- The institute is forerunner institution in starting dairy education programmes to meet the manpower requirements of the Nation's dairy industry.

PARIMAN: The Geo-Portal for NCR made Public

For the purpose of effective utilization of Remote Sensing and GIS technology, a web geo-portal had been developed.

- It was developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC), initially for use by NCR Participating states and the Office of NCRPB.

Key Points

- This Geo-Portal will help to improve decentralized planning and management in NCR region.
- The Portal consists of around 179 Layers presented as Line, Point & Polygon feature covering details of various sectors.
 - The sectors include Land Use, Transport, Industries, Water, Power, Health, Shelter, Heritage & Tourism, Disaster Management, etc.
- Now, with an intent of optimum utilization of resources in Public interest, NCRPB has made the Geo-Portal open to Public.
- Geo-Portal for NCR is known as 'PARIMAN' and was launched in Aug, 2021.

NITI Aayog Welcomes Parameswaran Iyer as Its CEO

Parameswaran Iyer, who had spearheaded the implementation of the flagship USD 20 billion Swachh Bharat Mission, took charge as the CEO of NITI Aayog.

- He has an experience of over 25 years in the water and sanitation sector.
- A 1981-batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, Mr Iyer has worked with both the public and private sectors.
- He was Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in New Delhi during 2016–20.

Paper Import Monitoring System (PIMS)

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), has introduced Paper Import Monitoring System (PIMS).

- This has been done by amending the import policy of major paper products from 'Free' to 'Free subject to compulsory registration under PIMS'.

Key Points

- PIMS shall come into effect from 1st October, 2022.
- However, the online facility of registration will be available from 15th July 2022.
- The PIMS shall be applicable on import by a Domestic Territory Area unit on a wide range of paper products covering 201 tariff line.
 - The products will include newsprint, handmade paper, coated paper, uncoated paper, Litho and offset paper, tissue paper, toilet paper, cartons, labels, etc.
- However, paper products like currency paper, bank bond and Cheque paper, security printing paper, etc. have been excluded from mandatory registration.
- As per PIMS, an importer will be required to obtain an automatic registration number through on-line system.
- This has to be done not earlier than 75th day and not later than 5th day before the expected date of arrival of import consignment.
- The automatic registration Number shall remain valid for a period of 75 days.
- Multiple consignments Bill of Entry (BoEs) shall be allowed in same registration number within the validity period of registration, for the permitted quantity.
- Based on the demand of domestic paper industry, the introduction of PIMS is intended to curb imports under "Others" category Tariff Lines.
- This may also promote 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar' initiative under this category.

Maiden Service of Bharat Gaurav Train

The first service of the theme-based Bharat Gaurav Train from Coimbatore North to Sainagar Shirdi started its journey.

- With this, Southern Railway becomes the first zone in Indian Railways to get the first Registered service provider under the 'Bharat Gaurav' Scheme.



About Bharat Gaurav Trains

- Indian Railways had launched the operation of theme-based Bharat Gaurav train in the month of November 2021.
- The objective of this theme is to showcase India's rich cultural heritage and magnificent historical places to the people of India and the world, through Bharat Gaurav Trains.
- This scheme also aims to leverage the core strengths of the professionals of the tourism sector to run theme-based trains to tap the vast tourist potential of India.
- The scheme is similar to IRCTC's theme-based tourist trains like the Ramayana Express.
- Any operator can lease trains from the Railways to run on a theme-based circuit as a special tourism package.
- The operator has the freedom to decide the route, the halts, the services provided and, most importantly, the tariff.
- For using Bharat Gaurav trains, a prospective service provider has to register to place the demand for rake of Bharat Gaurav trains.
- The service provider can take custody of the trains for a minimum period of two years and a maximum period of up to the residual life of the coaches.
- The Railways will provide the loco and guard.
- The Bharat Gaurav scheme is significant on two major counts —
 - The first is it allows private players with domain knowledge in the tourism sector to run these special trains.
 - This was hitherto taken care of by the IRCTC.
 - The second is the Railways gets an incremental revenue from a new stream of business.
 - This could pave way for more privatisation moves in running of both cargo and passenger trains.

Note: South Star Rail is the registered service provider that operates this Bharat Gaurav Train from Coimbatore to Shirdi and back.

Ministry of Defence sets up an Apex Committee

The Ministry of Defence has set up an institutional mechanism comprising of an Apex committee with Defence Secretary as Chairman.

- The objective is to conduct a Performance and Efficiency Audit into various aspects of its activities.

Key Points

- It is a major shift from the existing transaction-based compliance audit to carry out an outcome-based Performance/ Efficiency Audit.
- It is aimed at enhancing overall efficiency.
- This kind of audit is expected to provide valuable inputs to the top management of the Ministry of specific shortcomings.
- The members of the committee include the following:
 - Vice Chiefs of the three Services,
 - Secretary Defence (Finance),
 - Chief of Integrated Staff Committee (CISC),
 - Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA),
 - Director General (Acquisition) and
 - Other senior officials of Ministry of Defence and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The broad areas that have been identified for the conduct of Performance and Efficiency Audit include the following:
 - Defence Capital Procurements,
 - logistics, inventory levels,
 - Maintenance of platforms/ assets, role and performance of Authority Holding Sealed Particulars (AHSP) etc.

- The committee chaired by Defence Secretary will identify specific areas for the conduct of performance and audit by CGDA.
 - This will help monitor performance audit reports and action taken thereon.
- It also shall advise Raksha Mantri on remedial measures to be adopted as well as measures for overall improvement.
 - This will help in strengthening of internal oversight and Risk Management Framework.

National Workshop on Dam Safety Act, 2021

Central Water Commission under the aegis of the Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Jal Shakti, is organizing a one-day National Workshop on Dam Safety Act, 2021.

- The workshop is aimed at sensitizing all stakeholders about the provisions of the Dam Safety Act, 2021 and to brainstorm on dam safety governance in India.

Key Points

- In India, there are 5334 existing large dams while the other 411 large dams are under various stages of construction.
- Maharashtra leads with 2394 dams while Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat are at the second and third spots in terms of the number of dams.
- India's dams annually store about 300 billion cubic meters of water.
- These dams are ageing over the years with about 80% of dams exceeding 25 years of age, and over 227 dams exceeding 100 years.
- The ageing of dams and deferred maintenance of the dam have made dam safety a matter of concern.
- The Dam Safety Act, 2021 was enacted by the Parliament and came into force with effect from 30th December 2021.
- The Act is aimed at ensuring surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of the specified dam.
 - This will help in prevention of dam failure-related disasters and to provide for an institutional mechanism to ensure their safe functioning.
- As per the provisions of the Act, the Central Government has already notified the constitution of the National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS).
 - This committee will be under the Chairmanship of the Chairman, Central Water Commission (CWC).
- Further, the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) has also been established.
 - It will function as a regulating body for ensuring the nationwide implementation of dam safety policies and standards.
- The Act comprehensively addresses the critical dam safety concerns under prevailing as well as new issues such as climate change, etc.
- Its key provisions include following:
 - regular inspection of dams;
 - hazard classification of dams;
 - emergency action plan;
 - comprehensive dam safety review by an independent panel;
 - funds for timely repair and maintenance;
 - operations and maintenance manual;
 - record of incidents and failure;
 - risk assessment study;
 - dam instrumentation including hydro-meteorological and seismological network;
 - accreditation of agencies;
 - emergency flood warning system; and
 - offences and penalty.

About Central Water Commission (CWC)

Central Water Commission is a premier Technical Organization of India in the field of Water Resources.

- It is presently functioning as an attached office of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India.
- Central Water Commission CWC is headed by a Chairman, with the status of Ex-Officio Secretary to the Government of India.
- It was established in 1945 by the Government on the advice of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Member (Labour) in Viceroy's Executive Council.
- The Commission is entrusted with the following responsibilities:
 - initiating, coordinating and furthering of schemes in consultation of the State Governments concerned,
 - conserve as well as control the water resource usage in the country
 - help in the fields of flood management, irrigation activities, drinking water supply, hydroelectricity generation, etc.

44th Chess Olympiad

The Prime Minister of India launched the historic torch relay for the 44th Chess Olympiad at Indira Gandhi Stadium, New Delhi.

- This torch will be taken to 75 cities in a span of 40 days before the final culmination at Mahabalipuram near Chennai.



Key Points

- At every location, chess grandmasters of the state will receive the torch.
- The 44th Chess Olympiad will be held in Chennai from July 28 to August 10, 2022.
- The prestigious competition, which has been organised since 1927, is being hosted in India for the first time and in Asia after 30 years.
- With 189 countries participating, this will be the largest participation in any Chess Olympiad.

Prime Minister's Awards for Promotion of Yoga

The Prime Minister's Award for Outstanding Contribution towards the Development and Promotion of Yoga, was announced for the year 2021.

- The award was first announced by the Prime Minister of India on the occasion of the 2nd International Day of Yoga celebrations at Chandigarh on 21st June, 2016.



Prime Minister's Awards

Outstanding Contribution towards
the Development and Promotion of Yoga

Awardees of 2021

- ✿ International Individual-
Shri Marcus Vinicius Rojo Rodrigues, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- ✿ International Organization-
British Wheel of Yoga, United Kingdom
- ✿ National Individual-
Shri Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Leh, Ladakh
- ✿ National Organization-
The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand



#YogaForHumanity

Key Points

- The Ministry of Ayush, Government of India had developed the guidelines for the said awards.
- A two-stage selection process through a Screening Committee (for preliminary evaluation) and Evaluation Committee (Jury for final evaluation), is followed.
- Nominations for the awards for 2021 were invited through an open advertisement on MyGov platform.
- Following are the awardees of the Prime Minister's Awards for Outstanding Contribution towards the Development and Promotion of Yoga for the Year 2021:
 - Shri Marcus Vinicius Rojo Rodrigues, Sao Paulo, Brazil-International Individual
 - British Wheel of Yoga, United Kingdom- International Organisation
 - Shri Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Leh, Ladakh- National Individual

- The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, Uttarkhand- National Organisation
- Bhikkhu Sanghasena from Leh is one of four recipients to receive the award this year.
 - He is a Buddhist monk from Ladakh.
- The winners will be felicitated with of a Trophy, Certificate and a Cash Award each. The value of each Cash Award would be Rs. 25.00 lakh.

1.30 lakh students as yoga instructors

In a bid to promote yoga for holistic well-being, the Beauty & Wellness Sector Skill Council (B&WSSC) organized an event to celebrate the 8th International Day of Yoga.

- Beauty & Wellness Sector Skill Council (B&WSSC) is working under the aegis of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

Key Points

- The theme of the event was 'Say Yes to Yog and No to Rog'.
- The event was followed by a "Convocation Ceremony" for students passing out from short term training courses of B&WSSC under the Skill India Mission.
- MSDE has been working closely with B&WSSC to build awareness regarding various career prospects in the field of yoga.
 - The idea is to encourage youth to embrace them for a promising future.
- B&WSSC offers three specific courses for yoga –
 - Yoga Instructor (B&W) NSQF 4,
 - Yoga Trainer (B&W) NSQF 5 and
 - Senior Yoga Trainer (B&W) NSQF 6.
- Institutions like the Art of Living, The Yoga Institute and Patanjali have been associated with the sector skill council and have contributed to its success.
- As a result of sustained efforts, over 1.30 lakh students have been trained as yoga instructors and trainers across the country in the last eight years.
- According to B&WSSC, the states with the highest number of skilled yoga students are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, etc.
- The sector skill council also has vocational education courses in yoga for CBSE schools starting from classes XI & XII.

About B&WSSC

- Beauty & Wellness Sector Skill Council (B&WSSC) is one of the autonomous industry-led bodies set up by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).
- It is a not for profit organization promoted by CII.
- The objective is to focus on establishing an effective and efficient ecosystem for developing and imparting skills in the Beauty and Wellness Industry.

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