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AN INITIATIVE BY
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The information in this magazine is intended to provide users with resources and information which they may find useful and of interest.

We take all reasonable steps to keep this information current and accurate, but errors can occur.

We express our gratitude to all our team members and thankful to all the advisors for making first step in publishing a small magazine.

Our Methodology for this Magazine

We have used official website pib.nic.in to collect important press release important for Exam

The topics has been categorised subject wise so that is is easy for aspirants to read in flow and relate the topics

Background information has been provided so static related to current can be covered

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An Initiative By Pradeep Kumar

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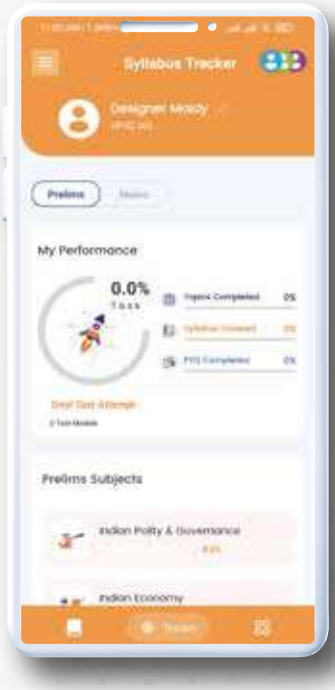

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History & Culture

Heli Borne Survey Technology

In News

The Central Ground Water Board carried out a heli bourne survey to gather aquifer related information in the arid and semi-arid regions of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Haryana under the Groundwater management and regulation scheme.

About the Heli-borne survey:

- A geophysical mapping technique provides high-resolution 3D images for subsurface up to a depth of 500 metres below the ground level.
- This survey can help in the potential mapping of groundwater in arid areas.
- This was developed by the collaboration of CSIR and the National Geophysical Research Institute.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

In News

The Prime Minister commemorated the captivating leadership of Shivaji Maharaj on his birth anniversary and paid homage to this gallant personality.

About Shivaji Maharaj:

- He is remembered for his excellent military strategy and leadership roles in the advocacy of social welfare with a committed vision.
- He is the founder of the Maratha empire.
- Every 19th day of February is celebrated as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti.
- He was a member of the Bhonsle clan of Marathas.
- Shivaji was crowned as the Chhatrapati (Monarch) in 1674 at Raigad.
- He promoted the usage of Sanskrit and Marathi language in the court and in administration.
- The necessity of naval force to embolden the military set up was addressed for the first time by Shivaji Maharaj. Therefore, he is known to be the Father of the Indian Navy.

Veer Savarkar

In News

The Prime Minister offered homage to the iconic personality of Veer Savarkar on his death anniversary.

About Savarkar:

- Veer Savarkar was an Indian politician, activist and a writer.
- He occupies an area of significance in the freedom struggle of india.
- He served as the president of the Hindu Mahasabha, opposed the Quit India Movement, and was a critic of the Indian National Congress.
- He was sentenced to 50 years in the cellular jail for revolting against the Morley-Minto reforms (Indian Councils Act of 1909).
- After his release from jail, he worked against untouchability in Ratnagiri.
- He authored 'The History of the War of Indian Independence', which offered an analysis of the 1857 revolt. He was the first writer to call for India's first war for Independence against the British.

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Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

In News

The President of India in a recent event said that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has a special place among those saints who promoted Bhakti-Marg.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

- Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is a 15th-century Indian Saint.
- He was born in **Nabadwip** (in present-day West Bengal) in 1486.
- His mode of worshiping lord Krishna with ecstatic song and dance has a great influence on Vaishnavism in Bengal.
- He was the chief proponent of the Vedantic philosophy of **Achintya Bheda Abheda Tattva**.
- Mahaprabhu founded **Gaudiya Vaishnavism** (Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya Sampradaya).
- He expounded **Bhakti yoga** and popularized the chanting of the **Hare Krishna Maha-mantra**.
- He has composed the **Shikshashtakam** (eight devotional prayers).

International Mother Language Day

In News

Under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, on the occasion of International Mother Language Day, the Ministry of Culture is organizing a two-day event.

International Mother Language Day

- In November 1999, the UNESCO General Conference approved the declaration of **February 21** as **International Mother Language Day**, in response to the declining state of many languages.
- It has been held every year since 2000.
- **Aim**: To promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism and the preservation and protection of all languages used by people of the world.
- Every year a unique theme is chosen by UNESCO to celebrate this special day.
- The Theme for **International Mother Language Day, 2022** is "Using technology for multilingual learning: Challenges and opportunities".

Maharaja Surajmal

In News

The Prime Minister pays tributes to Maharaja Surajmal on his Jayanti.

Maharaja Surajmal

- Maharaja Suraj Mal or Sujan Singh was a Hindu Jat ruler of Bharatpur in Rajasthan was born in 1707.
- Under him, the Jat rule covered present-day Delhi and districts of Agra, Aligarh, Firozabad, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Hathras, Kanpur, Mathura, Meerut, and Muzaffarnagar.
- Modern historians describe him as "the Plato of the Jat tribe" and "Jat Odysseus", because of his political sagacity, steady intellect and clear vision.
- Lohagarh Fort was built in the 18th century by Raja Suraj Mal and is the only fort in India that no one in history has won.
- After the defeat of the Marathas by the Afghans in the Third Battle of Panipat, Maharaja Suraj Mal gave food and shelter to thousands of Maratha survivors and received them with tender warmth and hospitality, giving free rations to every Maratha soldier or camp follower.
- Suraj Mal was killed in an ambush by the Rohilla troops in December 1763 near Hindon River, Delhi.

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Sustainable Cities India Program'

In News

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the World Economic Forum and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) to work in collaboration towards making the cities sustainable.

About the Initiative:

- The aim is to create an environment for cities to generate decarbonisation solutions involving efficiency in energy and transport, building an environment for a low carbon future.
- This will boost India's futuristic targets to mitigate the issues of climate change with the active participation of cities that will set upon an transformative journey towards sustainable solutions.
- It will involve a city sprint process and a toolbox of solutions for the decarbonisation in five to seven cities for a period of two years.
- The city sprint process is a series of multisectoral, multi-stakeholder workshops that engages businesses, government and civil society to join the initiative of reducing the carbon footprint through clean electrification and circularity. It will provide a roadmap for net zero emissions through planning and action.
- This is a welcoming initiative which will facilitate India to achieve its net zero emissions targets by 2070.

Swaminatha Iyer

In News

The Prime Minister paid homage to Swaminatha Iyer on his birth anniversary (on the 19th of February) commemorating his significant contributions to promote the cultural richness of the Sangam period.

About Swaminatha Iyer (also known as 'Tamil Thatha'):

- Swaminatha played a revolutionary role in the revival of forgotten works of Tamil literature.
- The Tamil poet and nationalist, Subramania Bharati equated Swaminatha with the sage Agastya who was among the first exponents of Tamil.
- He was born in a small village called Suryamoolai near Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu.
- He was a Tamil scholar and had joined the Government Arts College at Kumbakonam.
- The palm leaf manuscripts, a Buddhist work, were transcribed by him into paper and edited with special attention.
- The Silappathikaram, Purananooru and Manimekalai were some of the palm leaf manuscripts transcribed by Swaminatha and received enormous appreciation.
- He was awarded with the title 'Mahamahopadhyaya' which decodes as 'Great Teacher', by the Government of Madras in 1906.
- Sri Sankara Swamigal awarded the title of 'Dakshina Kalanidhi' to him.
- In order to recognise his service towards reviving Tamil culture and language, the Madras University accorded Swaminatha with the title of 'Doctor'.
- He published his autobiography named as 'En Saritham' which appeared in the Tamil weekly called 'Ananda Vikatan'. It was later published as a book.

Global Summit on 'Reimagining Museums in India'

In News

The Ministry of Culture has organized a Global Summit on 'Reimagining Museums in India'.

Global Summit on 'Reimagining Museums in India':

- The Minister of Culture under the aegis of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav organized the Summit.

- **Objectives:** To discuss best practices and strategies of museum development and management from India and around the world.
- The Global Summit will bring together leading luminaries, domain experts and practitioners in the field of museum development and management from India and around the world to discuss best practices and strategies.

River Devika project

In News

The Union Minister said that the historic River Devika project will be completed by June 2022.

River Devika project

- The project being built at the cost of over Rs 190 crore is said to be North India's first river rejuvenation project and will offer a unique destination for both pilgrims and recreation tourists.
- The project includes the construction of three sewage treatment plants, a sewerage network of 129.27 km, the development of two cremation ghats, protection fencing and landscaping, small hydropower plants and three solar power plants.
- The construction of the project started in 2019 under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP).
- The completion of the project will result in the reduction of pollution and improvement in water quality.

Devika River

- Devika river holds great religious significance as it is revered as the sister of Ganga.
- Devika, a small rivulet flows through Udhampur in Jammu & Kashmir.
- The river originates near Sudhmahadev and it merges with Suryaputri Tawi at Venisung and this confluence is a place of worship.
- The river again appears near Gangera in Udhampur.
- As it appears and disappears in many places, Devika is also known as Gupt Ganga.

Unravelling Tectonic Evolution

In News

The tectonic evolution and the nature of the Greater Maldive Ridge have been traced by a group of researchers from the Indian Institute of Geomagnetism which is an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology.

About the study:

- The important geodynamic features in the western Indian Ocean have been a part of several scientific debates.
- The Maldive ridge is an aseismic ridge that is not involved with earthquake activities.
- The ridge is located in the western Indian Ocean, southwest of India.
- This was for the first time that a group of Indian researchers in the region carried out a study.
- The Greater Maldive Ridge was mapped using high-resolution satellite driven gravity data.
- It has been postulated that the Maldive Ridge might have been subducted by an oceanic crust.
- The study systematically mapped the depth to the boundary between the earth's crust and the mantle which demarcates a discontinuity known as the Mohorovicic discontinuity.
- It was observed that the Moho discontinuity is deeper over the Maldive Ridge segment and shallows southwards in the Deep Sea Channel region.
- The effective elastic thickness (a determining factor for the strength of the Lithosphere), denoted as Te, was lower in the Maldive Ridge compared to the Deep Sea Channel Region.

Medaram Jathara

In News

Asia's largest tribal festival started with enormous traditional vigour experiencing a large number of pilgrims and devotees from all across the country.

The Medaram Jathara:

- It is the second-largest fair in India after Kumbh Mela and is celebrated by the Koya tribe of Telangana.
- The celebration continues for four days.
- This festival is with the objective of honouring the goddesses Sammakka and Saralamma. Saralamma was the daughter of Sammakka.
- It is celebrated once every two years in the month of Magha (February) on the full moon day.
- The idol of Saralamma is installed in the temple at Kannepalli, a small village near Medaram.
- The Koya priests called Kaka Vaddes perform the rituals.
- Traditional music is played with:
  - Doli – cylindrical drum
  - Akkum – Brass blowing instrument
  - Thootha Kommu – Bison horn blowing instrument
  - Cymbals

About the Koya Tribes:

- Koyas are identified as a warrior tribe.
- They speak Odia and Telugu languages.
- The last queen of Malkangiri named Bagaru Devi had a large Koya army with the help of which she defeated Ramachandra Deva III of Jeypore.
- In 1880, during the British period, the Koya rebellion took place under the leadership of Koya youth Tama Dora.
- They opposed the British government in many ways.
- The principal tribe is found in the Malkangiri district of south Odisha.
- They are also found in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Chattisgarh apart from Odisha.
- Koyas are widely distributed in Kalimela, Mottu, Podia, Mathili and Kokonda blocks.
- The Koyas of Malkangiri are ethno-culturally connected to Bison-horn Murias of adjacent Chhattisgarh.
- They are known as Madia in the Sukuma region and Dorla in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh.

Shri Guru Ravidas

In News

The Prime Minister offered homage to the Bhakti saint Shri Guru Ravidas on the occasion of Ravidas Jayanti.

About Guru Ravidas:

- He was a saint of the Bhakti Movement during the 15th to 16th century and was a mystic poet.
- Ravidas Jayanti is celebrated on Magh Purnima which falls on the full moon day of the Magh month.
- Ravidas Jayanti is identified based on the Purnima tithi.
- He propagated the Ravidassia religion that comprised his teachings directed against the prevalent evil practices of society.
- He was a contemporary to saint Kabir.
- He is venerated as a social reformer and a spiritual personality in many parts of India.
- His devotional verses were inserted in the Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib.
- Every year, on his birth anniversary, Shabad Kirtan is performed in Ravidas Mandir which is located in Delhi.

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Statue of Equality

In News

In order to promote the doctrine of equality, the Prime Minister unveiled the 216 feet tall statue of saint Shri Ramanujacharya in Hyderabad.

About the Statue

- This statue is made of panchaloha which is a combination of five metals namely gold, silver, copper, brass and zinc.
- It is mounted on a 54 feet high base building named 'Bhadra Vedi'.
- The Bhadra Vedi has floors devoted to a Vedic digital library and research centre, ancient Indian texts, a theatre, an educational gallery detailing many works of Shri Ramanujacharya.
- The statue was installed in the ashram of Sri Tridandi Chinna Jeeyar Swamy.
- The statue has been conceptualised by Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swami of Sri Ramanujacharya ashram.
- The statue is surrounded by Divya Desams which are ornately carved temples.

Shri Ramanujacharya:

- Shri Ramanujacharya, the 11th century Bhakti Saint, advocated the message of equality that was propagated across humanity.
- He put forth his composition for Sanskrit Granth and gave the Tamil language equal importance in Bhakti Marg.
- He preached the concept of equality among people irrespective of caste and creed which is also reflected in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution.
- Vishishtadvaita philosophy is the non-dualistic school of Vedanta philosophy.
- He fought for the entry of Dalits into the temples and propagated that for a human being, the character is important and not caste.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay

In News

The Prime Minister paid homage to the illustrious personality of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay on his death anniversary.

About Deendayal Upadhyay:

- He promulgated the principles of sarvodaya (progress for all) and swadeshi (self-sufficiency).
- He wrote a biography on Shankaracharya.
- His village in the Mathura district called Chandrabhan has been named after him as Deendayal Dham.
- He popularised the political philosophy of integral humanism which encourages simultaneous and integrated programmes of the body, mind, intellect and soul of each human being.
- Pandit Deendayal's vision for India was in alignment with decentralised polity and an economy that reflects self-reliance.
- He opposed the flourishing of western concepts like individualism, democracy, socialism, communism or capitalism in India.

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti

In News

The Union Minister for Minority Affairs offered "Chadar" on behalf of the Prime Minister at **Ajmer Sharif Dargah** in Rajasthan on the occasion of 810th Urs of **Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti**.

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti

- Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was born in **Sijistan** in Iran in **1141-42** He arrived in Delhi during the reign of the **Iltutmish**.
- He settled in the Indian subcontinent in the early 13th-century, where he promulgated the famous **Chishtiyya** order of Sunni mysticism.
- Later he moved to **Ajmer**, where he started living and preaching.
- Chishti was soon able to draw the local populace, poor people, peasants, and nobles from far and wide.

Ajmer Sharif Dargah

- The tomb of Chishti became a site of worship following the preacher's death in 1236.
- Rulers like Muhammad bin Tughluq and Akbar, have said to made their famous visits to the tomb.
- In the present day, the dargah continues to be one of the most popular sites of religious visitation for Sunnis.
- The Dargah complex of Chishti was built in **Indo-Islamic style** of architecture.
- A **golden crown** offered by Nawab Haider Ali Khan of Rampur sits on top of it and a lotus adorns the dome.
- The materials used include **marble**, **brick** and **sandstone**.

100 years of Chauri Chaura Incident

In News

The Prime Minister remembered the historic Chauri Chaura incident on the completion of 100 years in 2022.

Chauri Chaura Incidnet

- On 4th February, volunteers congregated in the town, and after the meeting, proceeded in a procession to the local police station, and to picket the nearby Mundera bazaar.
- The police fired into the crowd killing some people and injuring many volunteers.
- In retaliation, the crowd proceeded to set the police station on fire.
- Some of the policemen who tried to escape were caught and battered to death. A lot of police property, including weapons, was destroyed.

Polity & Governance

Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram (RYSK)

In News

The government has decided to extend the RYSK scheme to develop the personality and leadership qualities of the youth.

About RYSK

- The Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram scheme is a central sector scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- The beneficiaries of the scheme include youth in the age group of 15-29.
- The age group has been considered in alignment with the definition of 'youth' as per the National Youth Policy of 2014.
- The programmes of the RYSK scheme is implemented through seven sub-schemes:
  - Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)
  - National Youth Corps
  - National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development

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- International Cooperation
- Youth Hostels
- Assistance to Scouting and Guiding Organisations
- National Young Leaders Programme

Objectives

- The major aim of the scheme is to motivate the youth to strive for excellence in their respective fields and engage them in the developmental process.
- It seeks to harness the immense youth energy for nation-building.
- Besides, it also aims at enhancing National Integration, Adventure, Youth Leadership and Personality Development and Empowerment of Adolescents, Technical and Resource Development.

Kerala Lokayukta Act, 1999

In News

Recently, the Kerala government has proposed to amend the Kerala Lokayukta Act, 1999 with an ordinance, a move that has drawn criticism from the opposition.
The proposed ordinance envisages to limit the powers of the anti-corruption watchdog.

Major changes

- The Kerala cabinet has recommended to the Governor that he promulgates the ordinance.
- The proposal sought to give the government powers to “either accept or reject the verdict of the Lokayukta, after giving an opportunity of being heard”.
- By this ordinance, the quasi-judicial institution will turn into a toothless advisory body, whose orders will no longer be binding on the government.

About Lokpal and Lokayukta

- The Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013 provided for the establishment of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for States.
- These institutions are statutory bodies without any constitutional status.
- They perform the function of an "ombudsman” and inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries and for related matters.
- The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 provides for establishing a Lokpal headed by a Chairperson, who is or has been a Chief Justice of India, or is or has been a judge of the Supreme Court, or an eminent person who fulfills eligibility criteria as specified.

Historical Background

- In 1809, the institution of ombudsman was inaugurated officially in Sweden.
- In the 20th century, the Ombudsman as an institution developed and grew most significantly after the Second World War (1939-45).
- In 1967, on the recommendations of the Whyatt Report of 1961, Great Britain adopted the institution of the ombudsman and became the first large nation in the democratic world to have such a system.
- In India, the then law minister Ashok Kumar Sen in parliament first proposed the concept of constitutional ombudsman in the early 1960s.
- Dr. L. M. Singhvi coined the terms Lokpal and Lokayukta.
- In 1966, the First Administrative Reforms Commission recommended the setting up of two independent authorities- at the central and state level, to look into complaints against public functionaries, including MPs.
- In 1968, Lokpal bill was passed in Lok Sabha but lapsed with the dissolution of Lok Sabha and since then it lapsed in the Lok Sabha many times.

Ministry of Education launches Bhasha Certificate Selfie campaign

In News

The Ministry of Education launched a campaign 'Bhasha Certificate Selfie'.

'Bhasha Certificate Selfie':

- 'Bhasha Certificate Selfie' encourages cultural diversity and promotes multilingualism and to foster the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.
- Bhasha Certificate Selfie initiative aims to promote the Bhasha Sangam mobile app.
- It is developed by the Ministry of Education and MyGov India.
- The initiative is under the aegis of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.
- It will aim to ensure that people acquire basic conversational skills in Indian languages.

Operation Ganga

In News

Prime Minister chaired a high-level meeting to review the ongoing efforts under Operation Ganga to bring back Indians stranded in Ukraine.

Operation Ganga

- India evacuated its stranded citizens from Ukraine via Romania and Hungary through "**Operation Ganga**".
- The risky evacuation is taking place in the middle of a war, where Indian professionals are currently stranded in an underground bunker in Ukraine's capital Kyiv.
- Indian citizens entered Hungary from the Ukrainian border at the Zahony crossing and reached Budapest for the Air India flight.

International Monsoons Project Office launched

In News

Union Minister of State Science & Technology launched the International Monsoons Project Office (IMPO).

International Monsoons Project Office (IMPO):

- The International Monsoons Project Office (IMPO) will be hosted at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, an institution under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt of India, initially for five years.
- Both the World Climate Research Programme and World Weather Research Programme are international programmes coordinated by the United Nations World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
- The IMPO would support activities of the Monsoons Panel, jointly established by the World Climate Research Programme's CLIVAR (Climate and Ocean Variability, Predictability, and Change) and GEWEX (Global Energy and Water Exchanges) projects.
- The launch of IMPO is aligned with this year's theme of the National Science Day – '**Integrated Approach in Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future'.**
- The Ministry of Earth Sciences, World Climate Research Programme, and World Weather Research Programme are organizing it in India jointly in March 2022.
- The IMPO is a step towards making India a global hub for monsoon research and coordination in a seamless manner for addressing common and region-specific aspects of the monsoons around the world.

PM CARES scheme for children

In News

The PM CARES for Children scheme has been extended till the end of February, 2022 by the Ministry of Women and Child development.

About the scheme:

- The government to extend assistance to the children who lost their parents or single parents or legal guardians / adoptive parents due to COVID-19 launched this scheme.
- Under this scheme, an amount of Rs. 10 lakhs has been allocated to the children from the PM CARES Fund. This lump sum amount would be given to the children on attaining 23 years of age.
- The major aim of the scheme is to offer care and protection to the children in a sustainable manner through health insurance, proper education along with the provision of financial support till they reach the age of 23 ensuring a monthly stipend from the age of 18.

One class, One Channel

In News

A webinar on 'Widening reach of One Class-One channel has been organised by the Ministry of Education and was addressed by the Prime Minister.

About the Webinar:

- The significance of creating online content in the mother tongue has been discussed.
- Immense focus has been provided to the futuristic vision of digital education across the country and there were discussions on technical preparations required for initiating 200 PM eVidya DTH TV channels.
- The concern of heterogeneity among the learners' group has been raised and the need to introduce innovation in pedagogy for better learning outcomes has been highlighted.
- It is envisaged that the One Class-One Channel programme will play a transforming role in creating better learning outcomes.
- The medium of tele-schooling through the satellite medium of the Edustat network was discussed.
- The requirement of infrastructural set-up, creation of quality e-content in various languages, creation of quality digital content for DIVYANG (Persons with disabilities) and the gifted children were some of the key elements of the One Class-One Channel initiative.

National Means-cum-merit Scholarship Scheme

In News

The continuation of the National Means-cum- Merit Scholarship scheme has been approved by the government over the 15th Finance Commission cycle for a period of five years.

About the Scheme:

- The objective of the scheme is to offer scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to reduce the dropout rate from school encouraging them to continue their studies at the secondary level.
- To take the scheme further, one lakh fresh scholarships will be provided to the students of class IX every year and their continuation in classes X to XII.
- It covers the government aided and local body schools apart from the schools under the state government.
- The students are selected through an examination conducted by the state and union territories. The scheme is available on the National Scholarship Portal.
- The scholarships are transferred to the bank accounts of the selected students through the Public Financial Management System (PFMS).
- As this is a central sector scheme, the central government provides 100% funds.

SEED Programme

In News

In order to create welfare for the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic (DNTs) communities, the Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED) was launched.

About SEED:

- The scheme has been introduced for families having an income of Rs. 2.50 lakh or less per annum.
- The families that are not benefited from the similar scheme of Central and State Governments will be covered under this scheme.
- The scheme will be implemented through a portal which is created by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Followed by the registration of the beneficiaries to the portal, the applicants will be provided with a unique identification number which will be used as the permanent registration number enabling them to apply for one or more components of the scheme.
- A permanent database will be created in the portal for enrollment of applicants to the components of the scheme.
- The beneficiaries will receive the funds for the welfare schemes under SEED directly in their accounts.
- The Ministry of Rural Development, National Rural Livelihood Mission and the National Health Authority are the implementing agencies.

Jal Jeevan Mission

In News

Under the transformative programme of Jal Jeevan Mission, 9 crore rural households have been provided with access to tap water. This is a milestone achieved.

About Jal Jeevan Mission

- On the 15th of August 2019, the Jal Jeevan Mission was announced and intended to improve the quality of life and ease of living in rural areas with the supply of tap water.
- The objective is to develop the capacity of the local village community in order to achieve long term drinking water security.
- **'Har Ghar Jal'** is the motto and spirit of the mission.
- Presently, every rural household in Goa, Haryana, Telangana, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Puducherry, Dadar and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu is provided with the supply of tap water.
- The mission also aims to ensure the freedom of mothers and sisters from the traditional cumbersome task of fetching water for households improving their health, education and socio-economic conditions.
- Five women in each village have been trained to test water samples with the help of field test kits. These kits test the water samples on 9 parameters such as pH, alkalinity, chloride, nitrate, total hardness, fluoride, iron, residual free chlorine and hydrogen sulphide.
- This mission is geo-tagged which means the planning and programme implementation for drinking water supply for every village have been mapped using hydro-geomorphological maps.

PM Fasal Bima Yojana

In News

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana completes 7 years of its implementation that insured over 36 crore farmers.

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About the Scheme:

- The Government of India launched this flagship scheme on 18th of February 2016.
- The PM Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) aims to provide financial assistance to the farmers who suffer due to crop loss/damage as a result of natural calamities.
- It enabled the farmers to report crop losses within 72 hours of the occurrence of any event through a crop insurance app that facilitates electronic transfer of funds to the bank accounts of the eligible farmer.
- The National Crop Insurance Portal which is a part of the PMFBY is provided with the land records to offer technology driven facilities by easy enrollment process, remittance of farmer premium through the portal.
- It has been successful in extending financial support to the vulnerable farmers as 85% of the enrolled farmers belong to small and marginal categories.
- The scheme will be launching a doorstep distribution drive to deliver crop insurance policies to the farmers under the programme called '**Meri Policy Mere Hath'** in all implementing states.

New India Literacy Programme

In News

The Government of India has approved a scheme called the New India Literacy Programme to improve adult education and promote lifelong learning in accordance with the National Education Policy 2020.

Features of the scheme:

- The school will be the unit for implementation of the scheme.
- The survey of beneficiaries and voluntary teachers will be conducted in the schools.
- Performance Grading Index will be adopted for assessment at the state/UT and district levels on a yearly basis.
- An Outcome-Output Monitoring Framework will be set up for annual achievement survey of learning outcomes.
- Priority will be given in terms of categories to the girls and women, SC/ST/OBC/Minorities, Persons with Special Needs, marginalised/nomadic construction workers, labourers.

Objectives of the scheme:

- The objective of the scheme is to deliver the necessary components that intend to skill the youth and make them suitable for employment.
- It focuses on providing financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, health care and awareness, vocational training and so on.
- It will be implemented through volunteerism and will be through online mode.
- The materials and resources will be provided digitally with easy access to the registered volunteers.
- It will cover the non-literates of the age of 15 years and above in all states and union territories.
- It will also assist to achieve the target of foundational literacy and numeracy for FY 2022-27 which aims to cover 5 crore learners by using Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment System (OTLAS) in collaboration with the National Informatics Centre, NCERT and other institutions.

National Air Sports Policy (NASP 2022)

In News

In order to promote air sports in the country, the Government has prepared a draft National Air Sports Policy (NASP 2022).

National Air Sports Policy (NASP 2022):

- National Air Sports Policy (NASP) seeks to leverage India's potential for air sports and places a strong focus on ensuring international best practices in safety.
- The vision of the policy is to make India one of the top air sports nations by 2030.

- Once NASP 2022 is finalized and the proposed Air Sports Federation of India (ASFI) is constituted, the Government may release the funds based on need and justification.
- **Sports covered under the policy**: aerobatics, aeromodelling, amateur-built and experimental aircraft, ballooning, drones gliding, hang gliding and paragliding, micro-lighting and paramotoring, skydiving and vintage aircraft.

SMILE Scheme

In News

The Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment launched the Central Sector scheme "SMILE: Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise".

SMILE Scheme

- This is an umbrella scheme, to provide comprehensive welfare and rehabilitation to the Transgender community and the people engaged in the act of begging.
- The two sub-schemes of SMILE include, -Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons.
- It provides Scholarships for Transgender Students studying in IX and till post-graduation.
- It has provisions for Skill Development and Livelihood under the PM-DAKSH scheme.
- Through Composite Medical Health, it provides a comprehensive package in convergence with PM-JAY supporting Gender-Reaffirmation surgeries through selected hospitals.
- The Provision of Transgender Protection Cell in each state will monitor cases of offences and ensure timely registration, investigation and prosecution of offences.
- The National Portal & Helpline will provide necessary information and solutions to the Transgender community and the people engaged in the act of begging when needed.
- **Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging.**
- Will focus on Survey and identification, Mobilisation, Rescue/ Shelter Home and Comprehensive resettlement of people engaged in the act of begging.
- The scheme aims at achieving social security through multiple dimensions of identity, medical care, education, occupational opportunities and shelter.
- The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has allocated Rs. 365 Crore for the scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

Samajik Adhikarita Shivir

In News

The Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry launched 'Samajik Adhikarita Shivir' and 'An Integrated Mobile Service Delivery Van' for Divyangjan and Senior Citizens.

Samajik Adhikarita Shivir

- It is a program that will be organized to distribute aids and assistive devices to Physically Disabled persons under ADIP Scheme and Senior citizens under Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana
- The program will be organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) in association with the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), which is a public sector enterprise under the DEPwD.
- The Union Minister will also launch 'An Integrated Mobile Service Delivery Van' which has been developed by ALIMCO to provide "After-Sale Service".

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SBM-U 2.0 and AMRUT 2.0

In News

Both SBM-U 2.0 and AMRUT 2.0 have been launched to make cities 'garbage–free' and 'water–secure'.

About SBM-U 2.0:

- Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban (SBM-U) 2.0 was launched in 2021 for a Mission period of five years.
- It involves urban-rural convergence, whereby infrastructure projects can be taken up on a cluster basis to groups of neighbouring Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and rural areas.
- The aim of Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 is to make the cities garbage-free.

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 (AMRUT 2.0)

- AMRUT 2.0 is a step towards AatmaNirbhar Bharat with the aim of making the cities 'water secure' and providing functional water tap connections to all households.
- Mission also targets to provide 100% sewage/septage management in 500 AMRUT cities.
- The mission will co-opt women and youth for concurrent feedback about its progress.

Nai Roshni Scheme

In News

Recently, the Ministry of Minority Affairs has informed the Rajya Sabha that the Government has sanctioned Rs 26 crore under the Nai Roshni scheme in the last three years (2018-19 to 2020-21) through which around one Lakh women have been trained.

Nai Roshni Scheme

- Nai Roshni scheme is a Central Sector scheme.
- **AIM** - to empower and enhance confidence in women by providing knowledge, tools and techniques for Leadership Development of Women.
- It is a six-day non-residential/five-day residential training programme conducted by selected Programme Implementing Agencies for the women belonging to minority communities in the age group of 18 to 65 years.

Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources Scheme

In News

The expenditure under the NLCPR-State scheme is now being made for ongoing projects to meet committed liabilities as per reported actual progress.

Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR)

- The Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) Scheme came into existence in 1998 under the Planning Commission.
- Subsequently, it was transferred to DoNER (Department for Development of North-East Region) in 2001.
- Funds under the scheme are shared between the Central and State Governments on a 90:10 basis.
- The broad objective of the NLCPR Scheme is to ensure the speedy development of infrastructure in the N-E region.

One District One Product

In News

Government offers a giant technology boost to the One District One Product Mission.

About ODOP

- Under the initiative of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, **Lakadong Turmeric** has been listed under the ODOP mission.
- For the first time, a fly-off event took place with the usage of drones for the delivery of the product from the hinterland.
- This model of technology infusion will be a landmark for resolving the connectivity issues of the farmers to bring their produce to the market.
- **The Lakadong Turmeric** is grown in the West Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya with the highest curcumin content of about 7-9% which can be a major boost to the economy of the district.

Sainik Schools

In News

The Sainik School Society (SSS) is developing an automated system for conducting e-Counselling for admissions into Sainik Schools.

Sainik Schools

- Sainik Schools Society (SSS) is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Defence. The Society administers the Sainik Schools.
- The Sainik Schools were established in 1961 by K. Krishna Menon, the then Defence Minister of India.
- Sainik Schools are English medium residential schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education(CBSE) that offer admission at the level of Class VI and Class IX.
- Admission is based on the performance of candidates in the All India Sainik Schools Entrance Examination (AISSEE).
- Currently there are 33 Sainik Schools and the government aims to set up 100 new schools throughout the country.

Benefits of E-counselling

- Ensure complete transparency in the admission process.
- It will be less-expensive and user friendly for all the stakeholders
- Provide access for real-time monitoring of the entire process, and necessary action required at each stage.

Economy

National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change

In News

The effectiveness of the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change in important project implementation has been discussed in Rajya Sabha.

National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change

- The projects under the NAFCC operate under NABARD, which is the National Implementing Entity for the adaptation fund.
- It is a central sector scheme. The Central Sector Schemes are 100% funded by the central government and formulated on the subjects in the union list.
- The adaptive capacity of the states and the union territories that are vulnerable to climate change has been aimed to increase under this funding system.

- It encourages climate resilience in various projects related to agriculture, horticulture, agroforestry, water, coastal and low lying systems, disaster management, human health, marine system, tourism and other rural livelihood sectors.

Economic Survey

In News

Recently, the Finance Minister tabled the Economic Survey 2021-22 in Parliament soon after the President's address to both Houses of Parliament. The central theme of this year's Economic Survey is the "**Agile approach**".

About Economic Survey

- The Economic Survey of India is an annual document released by the Ministry of Finance.
- It contains the most authoritative and updated source of data on India's economy.
- It is a report that the government presents on the state of the economy in the past one year, the key challenges it anticipates, and their possible solutions.
- It is prepared by the Economics Division of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) under the guidance of the Chief Economic Advisor.
- It is usually presented a day before the Union Budget is presented in the Parliament.
- The first Economic Survey in India was presented in the year 1950-51. Up to 1964, it was presented along with the Union Budget. From 1964 onwards, it has been delinked from the Budget.

Major highlights of the Survey

- The Indian economy is estimated to grow by 9.2% in real terms in 2021-22 (as per first advance estimates) subsequent to a contraction of 7.3% in 2020-21.
- The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) projected to grow by 8-8.5% in real terms in 2022-23.
- Projection comparable with World Bank and Asian Development Bank's latest forecasts of real GDP growth of 8.7% and 7.5% respectively for 2022-23.
- According to the International Monetary Fund's latest World Economic Outlook projections, India's real GDP is projected to grow at 9% in 2021-22 and 2022-23 and at 7.1% in 2023-2024, which would make India the fastest growing major economy in the world for all 3 years.

Budget 2022-23

In News

Recently, the Minister of Finance presented the Union Budget 2022-23. With this Budget, India has marked the 75 years of Independence through Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. Apart from this, the budget also lays down a plan for next 25 years and refers to the same period as Amrit Kaal.

About Budget

- According to Article 112 of the Indian Constitution, the Union Budget of a year is referred to as the Annual Financial Statement (AFS).
- It is a statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the Government in a Financial Year (which begins on 1st April of the current year and ends on 31st March of the following year).

It contains –

- Estimates of revenue and capital receipts,
- Ways and means to raise the revenue,
- Estimates of expenditure,
- Details of the actual receipts and expenditure of the closing financial year and the reasons for any deficit or surplus in that year, and

- The economic and financial policy of the coming year, i.e., taxation proposals, prospects of revenue, spending programme and introduction of new schemes/projects.

Regulation of Crypto-currencies

In News

Recently, the Finance Minister, in her Budget 2022 announced a 30% tax on income from virtual digital assets. Additionally, she also proposed a Tax Deduction at Source (TDS) on payment made in relation to the transfer of virtual digital assets at 1% above a monetary threshold.

Virtual Digital Assets

- The finance bill defined the term "virtual digital asset" by entering a new clause (47A).
- As per the proposed new clause, a virtual digital asset is proposed to mean any information or code or number or token (not being Indian currency or any foreign currency), generated through cryptographic means.

Currency

- A currency is a currency only when it is issued by the central bank even if it is a crypto.
- However, anything which is outside of that loosely all of us refer it to be cryptocurrency but they are not currencies.
- These can be referred to as Virtual Digital Assets.
- Virtual Digital Assets also include Non-fungible tokens or NFTs, which are cryptographic assets on a blockchain with unique identification codes and metadata that distinguish them from each other. NFTs can also be used to represent individuals' identities, property rights, and more.

Powerthon-2022

In News

Recently, the Ministry of Power has launched Powerthon-2022.

About RDSS

- It is a hackathon competition under RDSS (Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme) to find technology driven solutions to solve the complex problems in power distribution.
- The hackathon will see participation from startups, Technology Solution Providers (TSPs), educational and research institutions, equipment manufacturers and state power utilities and other power entities.
- The nine themes for the hackathon are -- demand/load forecasting, AT&C (Aggregate Technical and Commercial) loss reduction, energy theft detection, prediction of DT (Distribution Transformer) failure, asset inspection, vegetation management, consumer experience enhancement, renewable energy integration and power purchase optimisation.

Lifting of "Export Prohibition" on Bamboo Charcoal

In News

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) urged the Government to lift the "export prohibition" on bamboo charcoal for optimum utilization of raw bamboo and higher profitability in the bamboo industry.

Indian Bamboo Industry

- In India, bamboo is mainly used in manufacturing of Agarbatti where, about 16%, i.e the upper layers of the bamboo, is used for manufacturing bamboo sticks while the remaining 84% of bamboo is of complete waste.

- The Bamboo waste generated in Agarbatti and bamboo craft industries is not being utilized commercially, as a result, the Bamboo input cost for Bamboo Sticks is very high compared to the average Bamboo cost.
- The Bamboo price in China is very low compared to the input cost owing to 100% waste utilization.

Bamboo Charcoal

- The bamboo wastes can be best used for making "Bamboo Charcoal" which has a huge demand in the international market.
- The demand for import of bamboo charcoal has been in the range of **$1.5 to 2 billion** and has been growing at a high rate.
- Rising import demand is seen in countries like the USA, Japan, Korea, Belgium, Germany, Italy, France and the UK.
- It is also used as a soil nutrient and raw material for manufacturing Activated Charcoal.
- However, the Indian bamboo industry is not able to tap the opportunity due to its "export prohibition".
- The exports of Bamboo Charcoal, Bamboo Pulp and unprocessed shoots are kept under the prohibited category in India.

ICRISAT

In news

The Prime Minister addressed the 50th anniversary of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in Patancheru, Hyderabad.

About the Institute:

- ICRISAT is an international organisation that conducts agricultural research for the development in Asia & sub-Saharan Africa.
- It was founded in 1972 by a consortium of organisations convened by the Ford and Rockefeller foundations.
- Its charter was signed by the FAO and the UNDP.
- It is managed by a full-term Director-General functioning under the overall guidance of an international governing board.
- It assists farmers in the improvement of crop varieties and hybrids.
- It is headquartered in Patancheru in Hyderabad with several regional centres at Bamako, Nairobi, Niamey, Kano, Addis Ababa.
- Ever since its inception, India has granted the institute a special status as a UN Organisation operating in the Indian subcontinent with immunities and tax privileges.

Agricultural Products Export Development Authority [APEDA]

In News

Agricultural Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) celebrated its 36th Foundation Day.

About APEDA

- The Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985, established the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).
- It functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Authority has its headquarters in New Delhi.

Various Initiatives by APEDA

- APEDA has promoted IT-enabled activities for ease of doing business in the promotion and development of exports from India.

- APEDA has undertaken initiatives like paperless office, APEDA Mobile App, phase-wise delivery of online services, monitoring and evaluation, uniform access, and virtual trade fair with an aim to take export of agricultural products to a new level.
- APEDA has been focusing on the promotion of exports of locally sourced Geographical Indications (GI) tagged as well as indigenous, ethnic agricultural products.
- A Farmer Connect Portal has also been set up by APEDA for providing a platform for Farmer Producers Organisations (FPOs) or Cooperatives to interact with exporters.
- For promoting use of hybrid technology, APEDA has integrated a Blockchain solution into its GrapeNet traceability platform.
- **GrapeNet** is a web-based certification and traceability software system for monitoring fresh grapes exported from India to the European Union
- The APEDA website provides online facilities for the issuance of Registration-cum-Membership Certificate (RCMC), Registration-cum-Allocation Certificate (RCAC) and submission of financial assistance schemes applications.
- The Government of India initiated the development of the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP), and APEDA is designated as the Secretariat for NPOP.

National Single Window System

In News

Jammu & Kashmir becomes the first union territory to get integrated with the National Single Window System (NSWS).

About NSWS

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has launched the national single window system for expanding the scope of Ease of Doing Business.
- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade in association with Invest India initiated this portal.
- It is aimed at making investments flexible and easy.
- This single window system acts as a portal that allows businesses to apply for clearances, track the process and address their queries.
- It ensures a one-stop solution for states and central governments in carrying out businesses bringing more transparency and accountability.
- It offers a Know Your Approvals service which gives information about the required approvals, criteria and a common registration form. This speeds up the process of documentation in carrying out business.
- This single window system is in alignment with the interests of schemes like Make in India, Startup India, Production Linked Incentive (PLI).

RCS – UDAN

In News

The first direct flight under the RCS-UDAN initiative was flagged-off connecting Delhi with the heritage city of Khajuraho.

Importance

- Spicejet was awarded the Delhi-Khajuraho-Delhi route under UDAN 3.0.
- This airline is the strongest supporter of the UDAN scheme and operates 65 daily flights under the scheme connecting 14 destinations of the scheme. The Delhi-Khajuraho route will be the 15th UDAN destination.
- Connectivity to the heritage city of Khajuraho will boost the tourism sector upholding the cultural prowess of the city.
- Therefore, this will provide an easy travel for the tourist to cherish the cultural richness of this country.

About Khajuraho:

- Khajuraho is an ancient city popular for its magnificent temples located in the Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh.
- It was built in the medieval period by the Chandela dynasty known for its Nagara-style architecture and graceful sculptures of nayikas and deities.
- The temples represent forms like meditation, spiritual teachings, and relationships through stimulating art.
- **It is one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India.**
- The Khajuraho dance festival can be witnessed in the month of February.

PM Gati Shakti

In News

The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan exhibited considerable progress in the development of connectivity across the country under the aegis of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

About the Gati Shakti Master Plan:

- Gati Shakti is a digital platform that brings together 16 ministries that include railways and roadways.
- It intends to establish integrated planning and effective implementation of the projects for industry clusters and economic nodes.
- The scheme will provide impetus to several Greenfield expressways, Multi-Modal Logistics Parks as components of the Bharatmala Pariyojana and other connectivity schemes of the ministry.

Important Projects under Gati Shakti:

- Delhi-Mumbai Expressway
- Ahmedabad-Dholera Expressway
- Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway
- Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway
- Zojila tunnel
- Roads to connect Krishnapatnam Port (Andhra Pradesh)
- A major bridge over Middle Strait Creek
- Bridge over Ganga bridge at Phaphamau
- Bridge over the Brahmaputra between Dhubri and Phulbari

Parvatmala

In News

Union Budget for 2022-23 announced National Ropeways Development Programme – “Parvatmala”.

Parvatmala:

- Parvatmala is also known as National Ropeways Development Programme.
- It has been announced for hilly states including Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and the North East region of the country.
- The project will be taken as a preferred ecologically sustainable alternative to conventional roads in difficult hilly areas.
- It will be taken up in PPP mode.

Objectives:

- To improve connectivity and convenience for commuters
- To promote tourism

Corporatisation of Ordnance Factories

In News

The Government is committed to safeguarding the interests of the erstwhile Ordnance Factory Board (OFB).

Corporatisation of OFB:

- The main idea behind this has been efforts to improve the efficiency in the functioning of the units; improvement in the quality and making the end products competitive.
- Three expert committees looking into the defense reforms recommended the corporatization of OFB.
- These include – in 2000 the TKS Nair Committee; this was followed by Vijay Kelkar Committee in 2005; and then in 2015 Vice Admiral Raman Puri Committee.

About OFB

- The Kolkata-based OFB presides over a group of 41 factories that specialize in the production, testing, logistics, research, development and marketing of a comprehensive product range in the area of land, sea and air systems.
- The origin of the OFB can be traced back to British times when the colonialists set up the Board of Ordnance at Kolkata's Fort William in 1775.

Blue Revolution

In News

The Blue Revolution scheme of the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and its progressive outcomes were discussed in the Parliament.

About the scheme

- It was implemented for a period of five years as a centrally sponsored scheme.
- The purpose of the scheme was to increase the inland and marine productivity of fisheries through financial assistance and multidimensional activities.
- Overall growth and adequate funding have been reported in the last five years.
- The PMMSY (Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana) has provided a major boost to the objectives of the blue revolution.

National Agriculture Disaster Management Scheme

In News

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has launched a flagship network project called the National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) in line with the National Agriculture Disaster Management Scheme.

Features of the scheme

- The scheme will tackle the issues of sudden climate change that impact agriculture incurring huge losses for the farmers.
- Under the scheme, the government will make an attempt to introduce climate-smart technologies involving farmers in risk assessment and adaptation techniques in several clusters covering many villages.
- About 65 location-specific climate-resilient technologies have been developed.
- So far, 8 climate-resilient varieties have been identified in rice, green gram, maize and lentil.

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Agriculture with New Perspective of Atma Nirbhar North East-Initiative of NERCRMS

In News

The North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Society (NERCRMS) organized a training programme for spice growers.

North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Society (NERCRMS):

- NERCORMP is a livelihood and rural development project aimed to transform the lives of the poor and marginalized tribal families in North East(NE) India.
- It is a registered society under the aegis of NEC under the Ministry of DoNER.
- NERCORMP is a joint developmental initiative of the North Eastern Council(NEC), Ministry of DoNER, Govt. of India and the International Fund for Agricultural Development(IFAD).

Towns of Export Excellence

In News

39 towns have been recognized as Towns of Export Excellence under the foreign trade policy towns of export excellence to avail the benefits under the policy.

Towns of Export Excellence: Benefits

- Towns producing goods of Rs 750 crore or more can be recognised as Towns of Export Excellence based on the potential for growth in exports.
- Recognised associations of units in towns of export excellence can avail financial assistance under the Market Access Initiative Scheme, on a priority basis.
- The assistance will be provided for export promotion projects for marketing, capacity building and technical services.
- The common service providers in the towns of export excellence are entitled for authorization under the Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme.
- Tripur, Ludhiana, Panipat, Kanoor and Karur are some of the towns under this category.

Science & Technology

New methods to transform phenol into key essential ingredients

In News

Indian researchers from the Centre for nano and soft matter sciences and CSIR – National Chemical Laboratory have regarded electrolysis as an effective way for the oxidative transformation of phenol.

The electrochemical organic transformation:

- The study involves the electrochemical organic transformation of phenol to 1,4 hydroquinone and other oxidised products which have several industrial applications.
- The oxidative products of phenols like 1,4 hydroquinone, catechol or resorcinol play an important role in the synthesis of medicinal and industrial organic compounds.
- **1,4 hydroquinone** is used as an intermediate in the manufacturing of food preservatives, pharmaceuticals and polymers.
- This method provides economic and environmental advantages compared to conventional chemical methods.

- After a detailed study, researchers found that the issue with the metal-based electrodes can be overcome by using graphene-like structures with the desired number of oxygen-bearing surface functional groups.

Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship

In News

Union Minister of State of Science & Technology said that India is currently witnessing a sort of reverse brain drain with several Indian origin Scientists abroad keen to return home.

Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship programme

- It is a flagship scheme of the Department of Biotechnology, launched in 2006-07, with a view to bring back the Indian Scientists working in Modern Biology, Biotechnology, Life Sciences and other related areas abroad.
- The programme aims to improve the country's human resource capacity in the research field in terms of development, translation and diffusion by attracting scientists abroad.
- The fellowship programme is being managed by Regional Center for Biotechnology under its **DBT-HRD Project & Management Unit** (DBT-HRD PMU).
- Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellows would be able to work in any of the scientific institutions in the country and shall be eligible for regular research grants through research schemes of various S&T agencies of the Government of India.

Artificial Neural Network (ANN)

In News

Recently, the global Artificial Neural Network (ANN) Market report was published.
An information bank delivers comprehensive information about the market ranging from the establishment to the predictable growth trend.

About AAN

- It is a vital subset of machine learning that helps computer scientists in their work on complex tasks, such as, strategizing, making predictions, and recognizing trends.
- It is a computational model that mimics the way nerve cells work in the human brain. It is designed to simulate the way the human brain analyzes and processes information.
- It is not like other machine learning algorithms that crunch numbers or organise data, it is an algorithm that learns from experience and repeated tasks performed by its users.
- It is also known as a Neural Network (NN). ANN is a computational model based on the functions and structure of biological neural networks.

CORBEVAX

In News

CORBEVAXTM is India's first indigenously developed receptor binding domain protein sub-unit vaccine for COVID-19.

About the Vaccine:

- Biological E Limited develops this with the support of the Department of Biotechnology and Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).
- It is a recombinant protein vaccine, which uses the receptor-binding domain of the spike protein on the viral surface.
- A double dose vaccine is administered intramuscularly and stored at 2° C to 8° C.

Dhara – an Ode to Indian Knowledge System

In News

The Ministry of Culture organized the first event of the series Dhara – an Ode to the Indian Knowledge System today as part of Science Vigyan Sarvatra Pujyate.

About Dhara

- DHARA is an Ode to the Indian Knowledge System which is organized by the Ministry of Culture.
- DHARA provides a series of programmes which are powered by lecture demonstrations, celebrating India's contribution across diverse fields.

Telecommunication Engineering Center(TEC)

In News

The Telecommunication Engineering Center (TEC) has invited inputs for developing a framework for fairness assessment of Artificial Intelligence (AI)/ Machine Learning (ML) Systems.

Telecommunication Engineering Center (TEC)

- The Telecommunication Engineering Center is a body under telecom commission and a nodal agency of the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India.
- It is responsible for drawing up standards, generic requirements, interface requirements, service requirements and specifications for telecom products, services and networks.
- **Objectives:**
  - Develop new specifications and update the existing ones in order to keep pace with the global development.
  - Establishment of state-of-art telecom laboratories.
  - Active participation in professional bodies such as ITU, IETF, APT etc. to protect the country's interests.

An Observation from the Devasthal Observatory

In News

A team of Indian scientists has made an important observation pertaining to the atmospheric pressure at the surface of Pluto from the Devasthal observatory along with their international counterparts.

About the observation:

- It was found that the atmospheric pressure on the surface of Pluto is 80,000 times less than the atmospheric pressure at mean sea level on Earth.
- The Devasthal optical telescope was used to provide data that helped in the calculation of the atmospheric pressure of Pluto. It was calculated by the observation of stellar occultation by Pluto on a particular day.
- In astronomy, occultation occurs when a celestial object gets hidden from the view of the observer due to another celestial object passing in between them.
- Pluto has observed such an event in a compilation of twelve stellar occultations within a span of 1988 and 2016. It has been observed that there is a three-fold monotonic increase of atmospheric pressure of Pluto.
- An international team of scientists along with members from the Aryabhatta Research Institute of Observational Sciences used signal to noise ratio to determine the atmospheric pressure at the surface of Pluto.
- The team explained further that this occultation was particularly timely as it can assess the current models of the atmospheric evolution of Pluto.

Facts about Pluto:

- It is categorised as the dwarf planet in the Kuiper belt which is a donut-shaped region of icy bodies beyond the orbit of Neptune.
- It is 1400 miles wide and orbits the sun about 3.6 billion miles away on an average.
- A year of Pluto consists of 248 Earth years and a day on Pluto lasts 153 hours.
- Its atmosphere is thin and has nitrogen, methane and carbon monoxide.
- Pluto has 5 moons and the largest one is called Charon.
- It doesn't have any ring system.
- New Horizons of NASA was the only spacecraft to visit Pluto.
- The surface is harsh and cold with a temperature of -378 to 396 degrees Fahrenheit.

Devasthal Optical Telescope:

- It is 3.6 metre long clear aperture telescope which was built by Aryabhatta Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) and is located at the Devasthal Observatory near Nainital, Uttarakhand.
- It has been built in collaboration with the Belgian firm Advanced Mechanical and Optical System.
- The Prime Ministers of India and Belgium activated it remotely in 2016.
- ARIES operates another 1.3 m telescope at the same location.
- This is presently the largest telescope in Asia.

Vigyan Sarvatra Pujyate

In News

As part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Government's various science and technology organisations are celebrating a week-long programme called **Vigyan Sarvatra Pujyate.**

Vigyan Sarvatra Pujyate

- A programme titled Vigyan Sarvatra Pujyate is being held to celebrate the S&T achievements of India over the past 75 years.
- It is being held at 75 locations across the length and breadth of the country
- As a part of the program, a science & technology mega expo and National Science Book Fair is being held in New Delhi.
- This program is jointly organised by the Department of Science and Technology, Department of Biotechnology, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Indian Council of Medical Research, All India Council for Technical Education, and Defence Research Development Organisation. Under the leadership of the office of the Principal Scientific Officer to the Government of India and the Ministry of Culture.
- Vigyan Prasar, an autonomous organization of DST, is the coordinating agency.
- AIM- Reinforce the commitment of the scientific community towards the economic and social development of the country.

Health & Medicine

National Polio Immunisation Drive, 2022

In News

The National Polio Immunisation Drive, 2022 has been launched to vaccinate every child below five years of age against Polio.

Polio Eradication Programme in India:

- India responded to a resolution passed by the World Health Assembly for global polio eradication with firm commitment.
- The National Immunisation Day was launched in India in 1995 and it is popular as Pulse Polio Immunisation Programme.
- In states with high risk, multiple rounds of sub national immunisation day (SNID) have been conducted over the years.
- All children under five years of age have been provided with oral polio drops.
- Surveillance through acute flaccid paralysis has been carried out to detect paralysis due to Poliovirus transmission.

About Poliomyelitis:

- Polio or Poliomyelitis is a contagious and life threatening disease caused by Poliovirus.
- It leads to paralysis by invasion of the brain and spinal cord by the virus.
- It is transmitted from person to person.
- So far, vaccination has been the best protection against the virus.
- It spreads majorly through the faecal-oral route by ingestion of contaminated food or water.
- It has a seasonal transmission tendency in temperate climates with the highest chance of occurrence in summer and autumn.

Guduchi

In News

A herb called Guduchi has been declared safe without any toxic effects by the Ministry of Ayush.

About Guduchi:

- Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) is considered to be the best rejuvenating herb according to Ayurveda.
- The dosage is an important factor to determine the safety of the herb.
- A study inferred that a lower concentration of Guduchi powder increased the lifespan of fruit flies. The reverse is true when it is used at higher concentrations.
- It has several medicinal properties like:
  - Anti-oxidant
  - Anti-hyperglycemic
  - Anti-hyperlipidemic
  - Hepatoprotective (protects the liver)
  - Osteoprotective
  - Anti-cancer
  - Antipyretic
  - Anti-inflammatory
  - Anti-microbial
  - Analgesic
- It is beneficial in the treatment of various metabolic disorders and acts as a potential immunity booster.
- This herb is found in tropical and subtropical zones at an altitude of 600m and is grown in deciduous and dry forests at elevations up to 1000ft.
- In India, it is usually found in the stretch of Kumaon to Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala and so on.

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Fairbanks Disease and Acromegaly Disorder's

In News

Recently, the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare has informed the Rajya Sabha that Fairbanks Disease and Acromegaly Disorder's patients are getting treatment at various tertiary health facilities like Medical Colleges, Central Institutes like AIIMS at free or subsidized rates besides in tertiary care private hospitals.

Fairbanks Disease

- Fairbanks disease or multiple epiphyseal dysplasia (MED) is a rare genetic disorder (dominant form--1 in 10,000 births) which affects the growing ends of bones.
- Bones usually elongate by a process that involves the depositing of cartilage at the ends of the bones, called ossification.
- This cartilage then mineralizes and hardens to become bone. In MED, this process is defective.
- The Fairbank's disease (Multiple epiphyseal dysplasia) patient usually requires management of pain and orthopedic procedures, for which facilities are available at tertiary care institutions in India.

Acromegaly Disorder

- Acromegaly is a hormonal disorder that leads to the abnormal growth of hands, feet and face.
- This disorder is mainly caused due to the excessive production of the Growth Hormone (GH) produced by the Pituitary gland.

Status of IMR and MMR in India

In News

The report of the Registrar General of India determined that there has been a reduction in the Infant Mortality Rate and Maternal Mortality Rate both at the national level and at the level of states and union territories.

Measures to tackle IMR

- Facility based New-born Care – The Sick New-born care units are set up in order to prevent the health risks of the newborns. New-born Stabilisation Units have been established at the community health centres to protect and care for the sick and small babies.
- Young Children – This is a home-based care programme wherein the ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers pay a home visit to assess the health conditions of the newborns.
- Mothers' Absolute Affection – Under this initiative, breastfeeding for six months and its benefits along with the awareness on infant and young child appropriate behaviour are encouraged.
- **The Universal Immunisation Programme** has been implemented to vaccinate children against life-threatening diseases like Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Polio, Tetanus, Rotavirus, meningitis that add to infant mortality.
- Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram – Under this programme, children from 0-18 are examined for 30 health conditions to better their survival. This is carried out by the District Early Intervention Centres.
- Anaemia Mukt Bharat – Anaemia in pregnant women and children has been assessed under the Anaemia Mukt Bharat strategy which is a part of POSHAN Abhiyan.

Interventions to improve Maternal Mortality Rate:

- Initiatives like Janani Suraksha Yojana, launched in 2005, has facilitated cash transfer to reduce maternal mortality by improving their health status and meeting their nutritional demands.
- PM Surakshit Matritva Ashwasan offers pregnant women free healthcare services ensuring zero tolerance to denial of services to pregnant women.
- **LaQshya** is a programme that aims to improve the conditions in the labour room and maternity operation theatres for quality service during the delivery and the postpartum period.

Environment & Ecology

National Natural Resource Management System

In News

The National Natural Resource Management System scheme has been discussed in the Parliament.

About the Scheme:

- It is a central sector scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change that acts as a national level interagency system for the integrated management of natural resources.
- In 1983, the Department of Space acknowledged the need to introduce remote sensing technology in the information system that was regularly used by the resource managers and planners.
- To infuse technology into the management of resources, the National Natural Resource Management System was launched under the aegis of the then Planning Commission with the National Resource Management Information System (NRIS) as the feeder information system of the government that involves socio-economic information and models.
- The major **objective** of the scheme is to promote the usage of remote sensing technology for inventions, assessments and monitoring of the country's natural resources.

'Lakshya Zero Dumpsite'

In News

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has approved the proposal of Dadu Majra dumpsite remediation in Chandigarh and agreed to offer financial assistance to make the city completely free of garbage.

Details

- The 'Heritage City' of Chandigarh was founded in 1953 and planned by the Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier and is renowned for its meticulously planned public spaces, greenery and maintenance of the strict eco-friendly norms.
- A large number of Community and Public Toilet seats have been provided in the city that transformed the lives of the people making it hygienic and dignified.
- The city of Chandigarh has been recognised as 1-star Garbage Free in the recently concluded Star Rating Assessment for Garbage Free Cities in 2021 under the aegis of Swachh Bharat Mission- Urban 2.0.
- The city was recognised for its commitment to transform 'manhole to machine hole' as the best performing union territory in the SafaiMitra Suraksha Challenge 2021.
- The progressive steps taken by the city to achieve its target of becoming a garbage free city, must be taken further and replicated across the country.

IPCC

In News

India welcomes the release of the Working Group II (WG2) contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

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Major Findings

- The Report affirms that climate change due to historical emissions is leading to serious impacts which are already being felt globally.
- The Report emphasizes that action on adaptation is urgently needed – as urgently as action on mitigation.
- Further, the SPM clearly acknowledges the importance of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in adaptation to climate change.
- Vulnerable and marginalized communities, regions and populations face rising exposure to hazards.
- The Report is a clarion call for the world to abandon their unsustainable production and consumption and move urgently to climate resilient development.
- The Report notes that the impacts and the consequent limitations to adaptation would rise beyond 1.5 degree warming above pre-industrial levels.
- Provision of finance is critical for helping developing countries and vulnerable populations act quickly and effectively. Public finance is the key enabler for adaptation.
- Rapid progress on achieving the SDGs will help in enhancing adaptive capacity and resilience.
- The Report re-affirms that the balance between adaptation and mitigation in climate resilient development depends on national circumstances.
- Adaptation suffers from a tremendous lack of finance, with only a small proportion of climate finance devoted to it, while the overwhelming proportion goes to mitigation.
- The Report recognizes the key role of agriculture and the great importance of food security in adaptation.
- India faces multiple climate hazards and has high vulnerability to climate change.

Golden Langur

In News

Assam villagers are opposing the sanctuary tag for golden langur habitat.
The Assam Forest Department had issued a preliminary notification for converting the 19.85 sq. km. patch of forest into the Kajoijana Bamuni Hill Wildlife Sanctuary.

Difference between Wildlife Sanctuary, Reserve Forest and Community Forest Resource

- **Wildlife Sanctuary**: It is the place that is reserved exclusively for wildlife use, which includes animals, reptiles, insects, birds, etc. wild animals, especially those in danger of extinction and the rare ones, so that they can live in peace for a lifetime and keep their population viable.
- The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 empowers the central and state governments to declare any area a wildlife sanctuary, national park or closed area.
- **Reserve forests**: They are the most restricted forests and are constituted by the State Government on any forest land or wasteland which is the property of the Government. In reserved forests, local people are prohibited, unless specifically allowed by a Forest Officer in the course of the settlement.
- **Community Forest Resource**: According to Section 2(a) of the Forest Rights Act, it is the customary common forest land within the traditional or customary boundaries of the village or seasonal use of landscape in the case of pastoral communities, including reserved forests, protected forests and protected areas such as sanctuaries and national parks to which the community had traditional access.

Golden langurs

- Scientific Name: Trachypithecus geei
- Golden langurs can be most easily recognized by the color of their fur, after which they are named.
- It has been noted that their fur changes colors according to the seasons as well as geography (region they live in).
- It is endemic to western Assam, India, and southern Bhutan.

Dholes

IN News

A new study has reported the presence of dholes or Asiatic wild dogs in the high mountains of Central Asia nearly 30 years after their presence was last recorded. The animals have been discovered in the Bek-Tosot Conservancy in the Osh region of southern Kyrgyzstan, a few kilometres from the Tajik border.

About Dholes

- Dhole (Cuon alpinus) is a wild carnivorous animal and is a member of the family Canidae and the class Mammalia.
- They are also known as Asian wild dogs.
- Historically, dholes purportedly occurred throughout southern Russia, all across central Asia, south Asia and southeast Asia.

According to recent research and current distribution maps, they are restricted to south and southeast Asia, with the northernmost populations in China.
In India, they are found in three clusters across India namely the Western and Eastern Ghats, central Indian landscape and North East India.

Coastal Vulnerability Index (CVI)

In News

Recently, the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has carried out a coastal vulnerability assessment for the entire Indian coast at States level. The assessment has been conducted to bring out an Atlas comprising 156 maps on 1:1,00,000 scales to prepare a Coastal Vulnerability Index (CVI).

About Index

- The maps will determine the coastal risks due to future sea-level rise based on the physical and geological parameters for the Indian coast.
- The CVI uses the relative risk that physical changes will occur as sea-level rises are quantified based on parameters like:
- Tidal range
- Wave height
- Coastal slope
- Coastal elevation
- Shoreline change rate
- Geomorphology
- Historical rate of relative sea-level change

Significance

- Coastal vulnerability assessments can be useful information for coastal disaster management and building resilient coastal communities.
- India has a coastline of 7516.6 Km i.e. 6100 km of mainland coastline plus coastline of 1197 Indian islands touching 13 States and Union Territories (UTs).

Extended Producers Responsibility(EPR) Guidelines

In News

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has issued notification on Extended Producers Responsibility to regulate plastic packaging under Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016.

The guidelines:

- The guidelines give a proper framework to improve the management of plastic waste and make it mandatory to reuse rigid plastic packaging material.
- The recycling of plastic waste under EPR guidelines along with the use of recycled plastic content will reduce plastic consumption and promote the practice of recycling.
- The guidelines set up a market mechanism for plastic waste management through the allowance of sale and purchase of surplus extended producer responsibility certificates.
- It will be implemented through a customised online platform that acts as the digital backbone of the system. This will enable online tracking and monitoring of EPR obligations and will decrease the compliance burden on the companies with the aid of online registration and filing of annual returns.
- It will also impose environmental compensation based on the polluter pays principle if the guidelines are not obeyed by the producers, importers and brand owners. As a result the pollution levels will be kept under check.
- In order to prevent the mixing of plastic packaging waste with solid waste, the producers, importer and brand owners may avail the provisions like deposit refund system or buy back or any other model.

Decarbonisation of transport

In News

In order to promote the idea of 'Financing for Decarbonisation of Transport', a consultation workshop was organised virtually by the NITI Aayog in collaboration with World Resource Institute, India.

Importance of Workshop

- The initiative of financing the decarbonisation of transport will be a sustainable climate-centric approach that will not only benefit the environment but also be of advantage from a financial perspective.
- It is in alignment with India's active participation in mitigating climate change and the ambitious targets set at COP26.
- Decarbonisation is an emerging concept of green mobility that ensures to reduce the carbon footprint that results from vehicular emissions.
- The transport industry constitutes the third largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in India and accounts for 14% of the CO_2 emissions.
- Therefore, it is a matter of essence to decarbonise the transport sector with active involvement of the stakeholders and strategic investments boosting a speedy transition to 100% zero emission vehicles. The workshop exemplifies a welcoming start towards a low carbon and sustainable future.

One Ocean Summit

In News

France has organised the One Ocean Summit in collaboration with the United Nations and the World Bank.

About the Summit:

- The Summit involved discussions to take various initiatives for the conservation of marine ecosystems considering the following intentions:
  - Protecting the marine ecosystem
  - Sustainable fisheries
  - Fight pollution
  - Eliminating plastics from entering the marine environment
  - Mitigate the impacts of climate change
  - Improved governance of oceans

- **OceanOPS**, a joint centre of the World Meteorological Organisation and the IOC-UNESCO, will launch the Odyssey project that will be endorsed by the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development in support of the Global Ocean Observing System.
- The summit emphasised the current and future challenges of maritime cultural heritage.

Objective:

- The Summit intended to encourage the international community to take attentive steps towards protecting and conserving the ocean ecosystem along with the sustainable use of maritime resources.
- The major idea is to collaborate on marine issues and convert the shared responsibility into achievable commitments.

Green Hydrogen/Green Ammonia Policy

In News

The Ministry of Power notified the Green Hydrogen/Green Ammonia Policy to step closer to the major objective of shifting towards renewable energy sources.

The Policy: Essential Provisions

- Green Hydrogen and Ammonia manufacturers will be allowed to purchase renewable power from the power exchange or can set up a renewable energy capacity themselves or through any developer.
- Open access will be provided within 15 days of receipt of the application.
- The manufacturers can bank the unconsumed renewable power for 30 days with distribution companies and take it back at the time of requirement.
- Waiver of Inter-state transmission charges will be offered for 25 years for the manufacturers whose projects commenced before 30th June 2025.
- Connectivity to the grid will be given on the basis of priority to avoid delays of tedious procedures.
- Incentives will be granted to the manufacturers and distribution licensees under the Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) for the consumption of renewable power.

"New Frontiers" Program on Renewable Energy

In News

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy will conduct a program on renewable energy titled "New Frontiers" that will involve students and think tanks.

About the program

- A physical event will be held by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy focusing on the topic, "India's Leadership in Energy Transition".
- The discussions are likely to surround the matters related to:
- Women in Renewable Energy – Call for Action
- Role of International Solar Alliance in Energy Transition
- Role of Clean Technology Start-ups and Climate Entrepreneurs
- The major objective is to adopt a roadmap to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070 by switching to renewable energy.
- It will also address the targets mentioned by India at the COP 26 and ways to achieve them heading towards sustainability.

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World Sustainable Development Summit

In News

The Prime Minister of India will virtually address the inaugural ceremony of the World Sustainable Development Summit which is an annual flagship event of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).

About the Summit:

- The summit will continue for three days involving heads of various intergovernmental organizations, Ministers/Envoys representing more than a dozen countries and delegates from over 120 countries along with the Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations.
- It will attend to the areas of climate change, sustainable production, energy transitions, global commons and resource security.
- The summit will provide a single platform with interventions from various stakeholders to further strengthen the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

World Wetlands Day

In News

World Wetlands Day celebrated at Sultanpur National Park.

About Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary:

- It is a natural flood plain wetland situated in Sant Kabir Nagar District of UP.
- It was established in 1980.
- Expanding over an area of 29 sq. km, the Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary provides wintering and staging grounds for a number of waterfowls and a breeding ground for resident birds.

About Khijadiya Wildlife Sanctuary:

- Khijadiya, which is part of the Central Asian Flyway, has become the fourth wetland of Gujarat to get the Ramsar tag.
- It is a freshwater wetland near the coast of the Gulf of Kutch, which was formed following the creation of a bund (dike) in 1920 by the then ruler of the erstwhile princely state of Nawanagar to protect farmlands from saltwater ingress.
- The sanctuary is now part of Marine National Park, **Jamnagar, the first marine national park in the country.**

Conserving Marine Resources

In News

The Government of India has put forth considerable efforts to conserve the coastal and marine resources through effective policy interventions and monitoring.

Government Interventions:

- The Wildlife Protection Act (WPA, 1972) consists of provisions that assure legal protection to many marine animals. India has 31 major marine protected areas that are notified under the Wildlife Protection Act.
- The National Committee on mangroves, wetlands and coral reefs functions as an advisory body to the government to formulate policies and programmes on marine species.
- The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification keeps a strict check on the developmental activities and dumping of wastes in the sensitive coastal ecosystems.
- The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 along with the Biological Diversity Rules 2004 aim to provide protection to the marine ecosystem conserving biodiversity, sustainable use of resources and equitable sharing of its components.

- The flagship scheme of the Department of Fisheries, PM Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), focuses on the sustainable and responsible development of the fisheries sector in India.

Atal Tunnel

In News

Atal tunnel has been officially recognised as the longest highway tunnel above 10,000 feet by the World Book of Records.

Details

- The certification of the Atal tunnel as the longest highway tunnel has been conferred at a ceremony to award the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) for its remarkable achievement in constructing the tunnel.
- **The World Book of Records** that offered the recognition to the tunnel, is an organisation that catalogues and verifies records throughout the world in order to authenticate such certifications.
- The Atal tunnel is regarded as an engineering marvel which is anticipated to play a future role in the development of the Lahaul and Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh.
- The tunnel will also benefit the armed forces by providing an alternative link to access the Ladakh region improving connectivity.

Incentives for adoption of renewable energy

In News

The government has decided to promote the adoption of renewable energy for a sustainable future for the country.

The incentives offered by the government:

- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) up to 100% under the automatic route has been permitted.
- The Inter State Transmission System (ISTS) charges have been waived for inter-state sale of solar and wind power for projects to be commissioned by 30th June 2025.
- The ultra mega renewable energy parks will be set up to provide land and transmission to the developers of renewable energy on a plug and play basis.
- The scope of the schemes like PM KUSUM, solar rooftop phase II scheme, Green energy corridor scheme will be extended for the evacuation of renewable power.
- The Project Development Cell will be set up for attracting and facilitating investments.
- Standard bidding guidelines will be framed for tariff-based competitive bidding processes facilitating procurement of power from grid-connected solar PV and wind projects.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy will be supporting a scheme called the Renewable Energy Research and Technology Development Programme to promote research and development on renewable energy.
- The scheme will encourage research proposals of renewable energy to collaborate with industries with 100% funding from the government/non-profit research organisations along with 50-70% financial aid to industry, start-ups, private institutes, entrepreneurs and manufacturing units.

Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship 2022

In News

The Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship 2022 has been announced by the office of the Principal Scientific Adviser, the Government of India under the Waste to Wealth Mission.

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About the Programme:

- The 'Waste to Wealth' mission is one of the nine national missions of the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).
- This fellowship was launched in 2021 to recognise the engagement of students, community workers/self-help groups and municipal/sanitary workers in tackling the issue of waste management.
- To continue the noble initiative, the Swachhta fellowship applications are released for the participation of all the stakeholders and encourage them to keep up the good work.

Import of Cheetahs from Abroad

In News

The Government of India is in the process of holding consultation meetings with African countries for bringing cheetahs.

About the Cheetah:

- The cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952.
- Currently, there are no cheetahs in any National Park or Wildlife Sanctuary in India.
- The cheetah is the only large carnivore to have become extinct in Independent India.
- The cheetah is one of the oldest of the big cat species, with ancestors that can be traced back more than five million years to the Miocene era.
- The cheetah is also the world's fastest land mammal that lives in Africa and Asia.

International Relation

India-UAE Virtual Summit

In News

In a historic move, India and UAE signed the futuristic Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEPA) during a virtual summit.

The India- UAE trade agreement:

- The free trade agreement aims to boost the trade relations between the two countries to US$ 100 billion in the next five years.
- This act has been iconic in strengthening the bond between the two friends of history.
- The joint vision statement emphasised on enhanced maritime cooperation, collaborative efforts to fight terrorism and measures to boost trade and investments.
- The signing of CEPA will result in several benefits like promoting businesses, enhancing market access and reduced tariffs.
- Two MoUs have been signed including a MoU between APEDA and DP World and Al Dahra has been signed to set up a food security corridor and MoU between India's Gift city and Abu Dhabi Global Market on cooperation in financial projects and services. This will be a welcoming move to enhance resilience and reliability of food supply chains.
- The two countries also agreed to work together on logistics and services, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, agriculture, agri-tech and steel and aluminium.
- According to CEPA, an extension of zero duty will be given to several sectors comprising 9% of India's exports within five to ten years.

Falkland Islands

In News

Recently, Britain rejected a statement from China that affirmed it's support for Argentina's claim to the Falkland Islands. Earlier, China and Argentina issued a joint statement that said China "reaffirms its support for Argentina's demand for the full exercise of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands (Falkland Islands)," using the Argentine name for the territory.

About Islands

- Falkland Islands, also called Malvinas Islands or Spanish Islas Malvinas, internally self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom in the South Atlantic Ocean.
- It lies about 300 miles northeast of the southern tip of South America and a similar distance east of the Strait of Magellan.
- The capital and major town is Stanley, on East Falkland, there are also several scattered small settlements as well as a Royal Air Force base that is located at Mount Pleasant.
- The two main islands, East Falkland and West Falkland, and about 200 smaller islands. The government of the Falkland Islands also administers the British overseas territory of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, including the Shag and Clerke rocks.

Unitary Digital Identity framework

In News

Recently, in a bilateral meeting India has agreed to provide a grant to Sri Lanka to implement a 'Unitary Digital Identity framework', apparently modelled on the Aadhaar card.
Both sides also discussed the fishermen's issue and India provided financial assistance of 2.4 billion USD to Sri Lanka.

Unitary Digital Identity Framework

- It is similar to India's own Aadhaar and under the proposed Unitary Digital Identity framework, Sri Lanka is expected to introduce a:
- Personal identity verification device based on biometric data
- Digital tool that can represent the identities of individuals in cyberspace and
- Identification of individual identities that can be accurately verified in digital and physical environments by combining the two devices

Schemes & Policies

Status of Commission for Denotified and Nomadic tribes

In News

The National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) prepares the state-wise list of castes belonging to a particular tribe.

Recommendations of the Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic tribes:

- It suggested a permanent commission at the centre for denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities.
- Setting up separate departments in every state for the above-mentioned communities.
- The definition of notified and denotified tribes must be put forth with uniformity in their categorisation under SC/ST/OBC.

- It recommends a caste-based census to enumerate the population of these communities.
- There needs to be more awareness among these communities for their inclusion in the mainstream and their access to several welfare schemes.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

In News

Recently, the Government has clarified that Aadhaar of Husbands is not mandatory under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, PMMVY, to facilitate the inclusion of single mothers and abandoned mothers.

About PMMVY

- It is a maternity benefit programme being implemented in all districts of the country with effect from 1st January, 2017.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme being executed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- Cash benefits are provided to pregnant women in their bank account directly to meet enhanced nutritional needs and partially compensate for wage loss.
- **Beneficiaries** receive a cash benefit of Rs. 5,000 in three installments on fulfilling the following conditions:
- Early registration of pregnancy
- Ante-natal check-up
- Registration of the birth of the child and completion of the first cycle of vaccination for the first living child of the family.

Saffron Bowl project

In News

North East Center for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR) under Saffron Bowl project has identified a few locations in Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya for saffron cultivation. The total cost of the whole project is Rs. 17.68 lakhs for Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya.

Saffron & its importance

- Saffron is a plant whose dried stigmas (thread-like parts of the flower) are used to make saffron spice.
- Saffron cultivation is believed to have been introduced in Kashmir by Central Asian immigrants around the 1st Century BCE.
- It has been associated with traditional Kashmiri cuisine and represents the rich cultural heritage of the region.
- It is a very precious and costly product.
- In ancient Sanskrit literature, saffron is referred to as ‘bahukam’.
- It is cultivated and harvested in the Karewa (highlands) of Jammu and Kashmir.
- It rejuvenates health and is used in cosmetics and for medicinal purposes.
- It has been associated with traditional Kashmiri cuisine and represents the rich cultural heritage of the region.

Nai Roshni Scheme

In News

Recently, the Ministry of Minority Affairs has informed the Rajya Sabha that the Government has sanctioned Rs 26 crore under the Nai Roshni scheme in the last three years (2018-19 to 2020-21) through which around one Lakh women have been trained.

About the scheme

- Nai Roshni-a Leadership Development Programme for Minority Women is a Central Sector Scheme for women belonging to minority communities in the age group of 18 to 65 years.
- It was started in 2012-13.
- The objective of the scheme is to empower and instil confidence among minority women, including their neighbours from other communities living in the same village/locality, by providing knowledge, tools and techniques for interacting with Government systems, banks and other institutions at all levels.
- It is run with the help of NGOs, Civil societies and Government Institutions all over the country.
- It includes various training modules like Leadership of women, Educational Programmes, Health and Hygiene, Swachch Bharat, Financial Literacy, Life Skills, Legal Rights of Women, Digital Literacy and Advocacy for Social and behavioral change.

Defence & Security

11th India-Oman Joint Military Cooperation Committee Meeting

In News

11th India-Oman Joint Military Cooperation Committee Meeting was held in New Delhi to enhance bilateral defence collaboration.

About JMCC:

- The Joint Military Cooperation Committee (JMCC) acts as the apex body between the ministries of India and Oman.
- This committee reviews the India-Oman relationship through meetings held annually.
- This body reviews and guides all areas of bilateral defence cooperation.
- The JMCC has agreed to initiate a series of high-level defence engagements between the two countries.
- The 11th meeting of JMCC was co-chaired by the Defence Secretary of India and the Secretary-General of Defence, Oman.

India-Oman Defence Cooperation:

- Oman is India's closest defence partner in the Gulf region.
- **Naseem al Bahr** is a biennial maritime exercise between the two countries involving the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy of Oman.
- The naval forces of both countries signed an MoU on the exchange of white shipping information. This will enable information exchange on merchant shipping traffic through an Information Fusion Centre in Gurugram along with the dissemination of data with partner countries maintaining the safety and security of the Indian Ocean Region.
- Besides, the port of Duqm in Oman has offered facilities to the Indian Navy through two critical MoUs ensuring maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean Region.
- Oman provides critical operational support to Indian naval deployments in the Arabian sea for anti-piracy missions.

MILAN – 2022

In News

The multilateral exercise of the Indian Navy will commence from the 25th day of February in Visakhapatnam. This exercise is popular as MILAN 2022.

The MILAN Exercise: The background

- It is a biennial multilateral naval exercise that took its advent in 1995 by the Indian Navy at Andaman and Nicobar Command.
- This event could not be held in 2001 and 2016 due to International Fleet Reviews.
- At its onset, the MILAN exercise witnessed the participation of only four countries, Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- Gradually, there was a significant increase in the number of participants along with the expansion of advanced maritime policies that intend to ensure security and safety of the oceanic space.
- With the expansion of the Indian Navy's engagement with Friendly Foreign Countries, there was a need to further strengthen the naval cooperation by enhancing the scope of the MILAN exercise bringing together both regional and extra regional navies of the world.
- Visakhapatnam, being the headquarters of the Eastern Naval Command, was nominated to host the event.
- **Aim-**The multilateral exercise intends to nurture operational skills, introduce best practices and procedures enabling a learning environment on maritime domain and the relative doctrines.

Exercise Eastern Bridge –VI

In News

The Indian Air Force (IAF) and Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) are scheduled to participate in a bilateral exercise named Eastern Bridge-VI.

Exercise Eastern Bridge -VI:

- Exercise Eastern Bridge -VI is the sixth edition of the exercise between **India and Oman.**
- **Aim:** To provide an opportunity to enhance operational capability and interoperability between the two Air Forces.

MAROON BERET CEREMONIAL PARADE

In News

To mark the successful completion of training for Air Force Special Forces Operatives of Garud Force, the Maroon Beret Ceremonial Parade was held.

Maroon Berets

- The maroon beret is a military beret and has been an international symbol of elite airborne forces since it was chosen for British airborne forces in World War II.
- These are the Parachute Regiment soldiers set up before independence and participated in the Second World War.
- They are known as "**Maroon Berets**" because of their characteristic maroon caps.
- All para qualified personnel in an airborne formation wear the maroon beret along with the Parachute Regiment and the President's Bodyguard, a ceremonial guard unit with their operational role as the pathfinder company of the parachute brigade.
- The MARCOS (Marine Commandos) of the Indian Navy are all para qualified and wear the maroon beret.
- The Indian Air Force's special operations force and Garud Commando Force wear the maroon beret.

LCA TEJAS

In News

LCA TEJAS to participate in the Singapore Airshow -2022

About LCA Tejas

- The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme was started by the Government of India in 1984 when they established the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) to manage the LCA programme.
- It replaced the ageing Mig 21 fighter planes.

Features

- The lightest, smallest and tailless multi-role supersonic fighter aircraft in its class.
- Designed to carry a range of air-to-air, air-to-surface, precision-guided, weapons.
- Air to air refuelling capability.
- Maximum payload capacity of 4000 kg.

Modernisation of Police Forces (MPF) Scheme

In News

The Government has approved the continuation of Modernisation of Police Forces scheme.

Major features of MPF Scheme

- To develop operationally independent high-quality forensic sciences facilities in States/Union Territories for aiding scientific and timely investigation through modernization of resources.
- A central outlay of Rs.18,839 crore has been earmarked for security related expenditure for Jammu & Kashmir and insurgency affected North Eastern States and Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas.
- With the implementation of the 'National Policy and Action Plan' for combating LWE, the LWE violence incidents have come down drastically.
- These schemes include Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Most LWE Affected Districts & Districts of Concern to consolidate the gains.
- For raising of India Reserve Battalions, Central outlay of Rs.350 crore has been approved.

46th Raising day of Indian Coast Guard

In News

The Coast Guard Component, on the occasion of 46th raising day, has been congratulated by the Commander-in-chief Andaman and Nicobar Command (CINCAN) for its relentless service towards safeguarding India's oceanic space.

About ICG

- The year 2022 marks the 46th Raising Day of the Indian Coast Guard which was founded on the 1st of February 1978.
- ICG was established in August 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978 as an independent Armed force of India.
- As the fourth largest Coast Guard in the world, it has played a significant role in securing the Indian coasts and enforcing regulations in the maritime zones of India.
- It is an Armed Force, Search and Rescue and Maritime Law Enforcement agency under the Ministry of Defence.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.

'Vagir': The Fifth Scorpene Submarine

In News

The sea trials for the fifth scorpene submarine of Project 75 commenced after which it will be named 'Vagir'.

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About Vagir:

- Vagir is the fifth Scorpene (Kalvari) class submarine constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited in collaboration with the Naval Group of France.
- This is one of the submarines under Project 75 with superior stealth features.
- It is equipped with advanced acoustic techniques.
- The submarine was named after INS Vagir which was a Russian Vela-class submarine that served in the Navy for a long time.
- This is capable of undertaking missions like anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying and area surveillance.

About Project 75

- There are six submarines of the Scorpene class which are to be constructed at the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited.
- INS Kalvari and INS Khanderi are two submarines under the project which have been commissioned.

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