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AN INITIATIVE BY PRADEEP KUMAR
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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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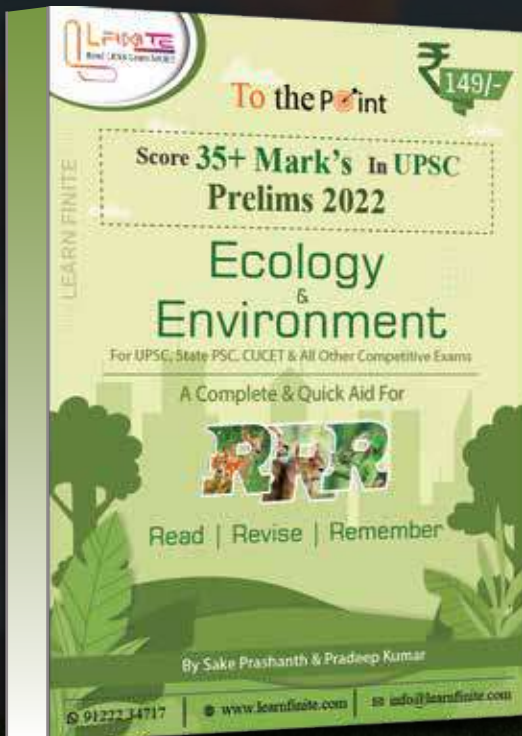
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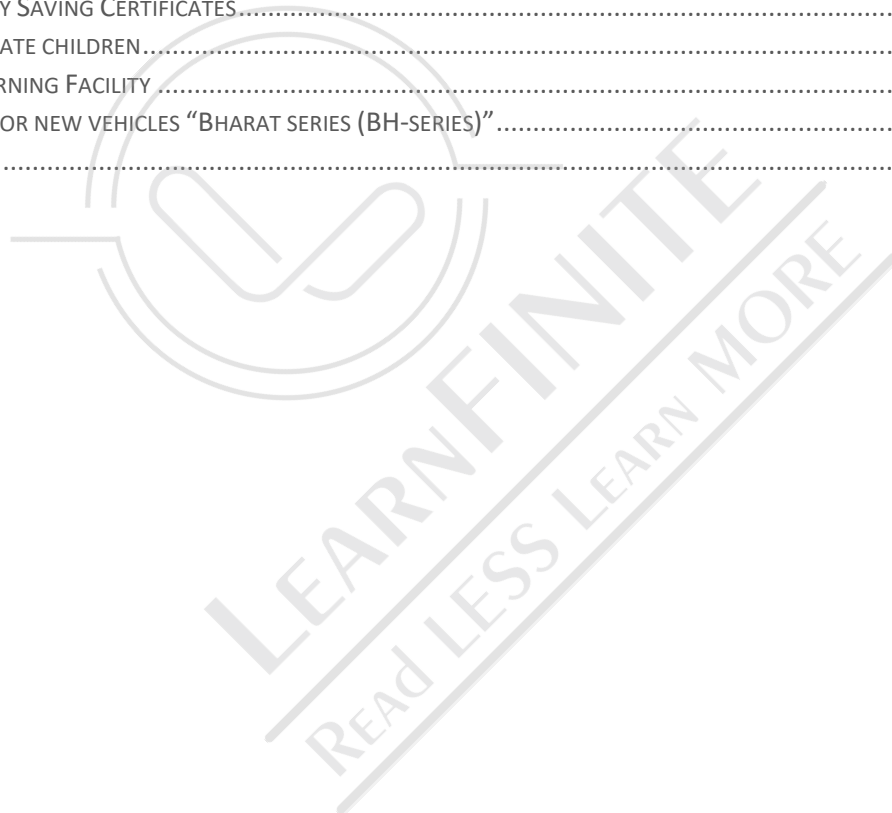
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History & Culture

Reetiyon se Kalakritiyon ka Safar

In news

Shri Upendra Prasad Singh inaugurates an International Exhibition on Folk & Tribal Art Paintings “*Reetiyon se Kalakritiyon ka Safar*”

Details

- 125 Folk and Tribal Paintings of 7 countries- India - 102, South Korea - 8, Indonesia - 1, Myanmar - 2, Sri Lanka - 2, Bangladesh - 3 and Nepal - 7 are on display.
- This special exhibition (from 18th August to 3rd September) has been curated by the National Crafts Museum & Hastkala Academy, New Delhi, in collaboration with Odi Art Centre.
- Such exhibitions encourage the artists and enable the art lovers to view and enjoy various forms of art at one place.
- The age-old traditions of decorating walls (BhittiChitra) convey the experience of nature and local traditions of different communities.
- Folk and Tribal paintings in diverse forms took the shape of kalakrtiyan.
- Such art has unique characters and features which shows the diversification in art form and have been a part of living traditions ever since.
- Therefore, this allowed the people to look into the past lifestyle of the time when the same was in practise.

Polity & Governance

Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021

In news

Government notifies the **Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021**, prohibiting identified single use plastic items by 2022.

Details

- Thickness of plastic carry bags increased from 50 to 75 microns from 30th September, 2021 and to 120 microns with effect from the 31st December, 2022.
- Pollution due to single use plastic items has become an important environmental challenge confronting all countries.
- India is committed to take action for mitigation of pollution caused by littered Single Use Plastics.
- In the 4th United Nations Environment Assembly held in 2019, India had piloted a resolution on addressing single-use plastic products pollution, recognizing the urgent need for the global community to focus on this very important issue.
- The plastic packaging waste, which is not covered under the phase out of identified single use plastic items, shall be collected and managed in an environmentally sustainable way through the Extended Producer Responsibility of the Producer, importer and Brand owner (PIBO), as per Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016.

- The Government has also been taking measures for awareness generation towards elimination of single use plastics and effective implementation of Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- To encourage innovation in development of alternatives to identified single use plastic items and digital solutions to plastic waste management, the India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon 2021, has been organized for students of Higher Educational Institutions and startups recognized under Startup India Initiative.

37th PRAGATI Meeting

In news

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi chaired the meeting of the 37th edition of PRAGATI, the ICT based multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation, involving Centre and State governments.

Details

- In the meeting, nine agenda items were taken for review including eight projects and one scheme.
- Among the eight projects, three projects each were from the Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Road Transport & Highways and two projects were from the Ministry of Power. These eight projects have a cumulative cost of Rs. 1,26,000 crore concerning 14 states viz., Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Delhi.
- During the interaction, the Prime Minister reviewed the scheme of 'One Nation – One Ration Card' (ONORC).
- In the previous 36 PRAGATI meetings, 292 projects having a total cost of 13.78 lakh crore have been reviewed.

Background

- RAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation), as the name suggests, is aimed at starting a culture of Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.
- It is also a robust system for bringing e-transparency and e-accountability with real-time presence and exchange among the key stakeholders.
- The platform was launched on March 25, 2015.

About PRAGATI

- It is a multi-purpose and multi-modal platform that is aimed at addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.
- The PRAGATI platform uniquely bundles three latest technologies: Digital data management, video-conferencing and geo-spatial technology.
- It also offers a unique combination in the direction of cooperative federalism since it brings on one stage the Secretaries of Government of India and the Chief Secretaries of the States.
- With this, the Prime Minister is able to discuss the issues with the concerned Central and State officials with full information and latest visuals of the ground level situation.

Making of the Constitution- e-Photo Exhibition

In news

Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) is launching a series of e-photo exhibitions, for an entire year, on various aspects of the freedom struggle, out of which the first one is on 'Making of the Constitution' "Chitranjali@75".

Details

- The e-Photo Exhibition depicts the framing of the Constitution supported by nearly 30 rare pictures.
- It also has links to videos and speeches which are sourced from AIR archives and Films Division.
- The e-photo exhibition traces the entire journey, right from the formation of the Constituent Assembly to the adoption of the Constitution and finally celebrating the first Republic Day of India.

Chitranjali @ 75

- It presents different moods of patriotism through 75 film posters and photographs from different language cinemas.
- The exhibition is divided into three segments: 'Cinema of Social Reform', 'Freedom Struggle through the lens of Cinema' and 'Saluting the Brave Soldiers'.
- Beginning with the silent film Bhakt Vidur (1921) up to the recent Telugu film inspired by the life of freedom fighter Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy, Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy (2019), these 75 images include biopics on prominent freedom fighters as well as the films in various languages depicting the spirit of India's freedom struggle, triumph over social evils and valour of heroes who are safeguarding our borders.

Key-highlights of the e-Photo Exhibition

The e-Photo Exhibition begins with the image of the Indian Parliament which represents the Constitution and of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who is known as 'the Father of the Constitution', because of his immense contribution in the making of the Constitution.

- **Formation of the constituent Assembly (6 Dec, 1946)** and the first meeting of the Assembly (9 Dec, 1946)- The Constituent Assembly which is a body of popularly elected representatives assembled for the purpose of drafting or adopting the Constitution, met for the first time on 9 December 1946.
- **Dr. Rajendra Prasad Appointed as the President (11 Dec, 1946)**- Dr. Rajendra Prasad, an Indian independence activist, lawyer, scholar, who would, in 1950, become the first President of India, was elected the first President of the Constituent Assembly.
- **Proposition and adoption of 'Objective Resolution' (13 Dec, 1946)**-The 'Objective Resolution' was moved on December 13, 1946 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, which provided the philosophy and guiding principles for framing the Constitution and later took the form of Preamble of the Constitution of India.
- **National Flag Adopted (22 July, 1947)**-The National Flag of India was adopted during a meeting of the Constituent Assembly held on 22 July 1947, and it became the official flag of the Dominion of India on 15 August 1947. The Flag of India constitutes of tricolour, i.e., saffron, white and India green; with the Ashoka Chakra, a 24-spoke wheel, in navy blue at its centre.
- **Independent India (15 Aug, 1947)**- On this day, the power from British Empire was handed over to India, through the cooperation of several freedom fighters whose efforts made independence a reality for India.
- **Drafting Committee (29 Aug, 1947)** -The Constitution was drafted by 299 delegates from different caste, region, religion, gender, etc. The Drafting Committee and its members were very influential in Indian Constitution-making during the Committee stages and the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly.
- **The Constitution of India was passed and adopted (26 Nov, 1949)**-This day is known as the Constitution Day or the National Law Day, is celebrated to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India. This constituent Assembly came into effect on 26 January, 1950.
- **Last meeting of Constituent Assembly (24 Jan, 1950)**-Last meeting of the Constituent Assembly. 'Constitution of India' (with 395 articles, 8 schedules, 22 parts) was signed and accepted by all.
- **When Constitution came into force (26 Jan, 1950)**-The Constitution replaces the Government of India Act 1935 as the country's fundamental governing document and the Dominion of India became Republic of India.

- **First General Election (1951-52)**-General elections were held in India between 25 October 1951 and 21 February 1952. They were the first elections to the Lok Sabha after Independence in August 1947. It was conducted under the provisions of the Indian Constitution, which was adopted on 26 November 1949.

The e-Photo Exhibition also has an additional interactive/engaging Quiz comprising a set of 10 questions to enhance engagement of the readers and ensure 'Janandolan through Janbhagidari' of the citizens.

Economy

All about e-RUPI,

In news

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched digital payment solution e-RUPI, a cashless and contactless instrument for digital payment

What is e-RUPI and how it works?

- e-RUPI is basically a digital voucher which a beneficiary gets on his phone in the form of an SMS or QR code. It is a pre-paid voucher, which he/she can go and redeem it at any centre that accepts its.
- For example, if the Government wants to cover a particular treatment of an employee in a specified hospital, it can issue an e-RUPI voucher for the determined amount through a partner bank. The employee will receive an SMS or a QR Code on his feature phone / smart phone. He/she can go to the specified hospital, avail of the services and pay through the e-RUPI voucher received on his phone.
- Thus e-RUPI is a one time contactless, cashless voucher-based mode of payment that helps users redeem the voucher without a card, digital payments app, or internet banking access.
- e-RUPI should not be confused with Digital Currency which the Reserve Bank of India is contemplating. Instead e-RUPI is a person specific, even purpose specific digital voucher.

How is e-RUPI advantageous to the Consumer?

- e-RUPI does not require the beneficiary to have a bank account, a major distinguishing feature as compared to other digital payment forms.
- It ensures an easy, contactless two-step redemption process that does not require sharing of personal details either.
- Another advantage is that e-RUPI is operable on basic phones also, and hence it can be used by persons who do not own smart-phones or in places that lack internet connection.

What are the benefits of e-RUPI for the sponsors.

- e-RUPI is expected to play a major role in strengthening Direct-Benefit Transfer and making it more transparent.
- Since, there is no need for physical issuance of vouchers, it will also lead to some cost savings as well.

What benefits accrue to the Service Providers.

Being a prepaid voucher, e-RUPI would assure real time payments to the service provider.

Who has developed the e-RUPI?

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which oversees the digital payments ecosystem in India, has launched e-RUPI, a voucher-based payments system to promote cashless transactions.

- It has been developed in collaboration with the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and National Health Authority.

Which Banks issue e-RUPI?

- NPCI has partnered with 11 banks for e-RUPI transactions.
- They are Axis Bank, Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Indian Bank, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Union Bank of India.
- The acquiring Apps are Bharat Pe, BHIM Baroda Merchant Pay, Pine Labs, PNB Merchant Pay and YoNo SBI Merchant Pay.

Where can e-RUPI be used now?

- To begin with NPCI has tied up with more than 1,600 hospitals where e-RUPI can be redeemed.
- Experts say, in the days to come the user base of e-RUPI is expected to widen, with even private sector using it to deliver employee benefits and MSMEs adopting it for Business To Business (B2B) transactions.

3rd ONGC handicraft project

In news

Shri Rameswar Teli launched ONGC-supported Assam Handloom project 'Ujjwal Abahan' on 6 August 2021 through virtual platform.

Details

- The project will support and train over a hundred artisans of Bhatiapar of Sivasagar, Assam in Hathkharga handicraft.
- This project is in line with the government's observance of "**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**", under which ONGC has earlier launched two projects supporting the indigenous handicrafts of the country.
- Observing India's 75th year of independence, PSUs under the Petroleum and natural gas ministry have undertaken 75 projects to be supported to commemorate each year of Independence.
- Among the 75 projects, ONGC is supporting 15 projects, which will be implemented by 15 August 2022.
- The 3rd initiative of ONGC is part of the first phase – in which the energy major will unveil five projects.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)

In news

Government has made a provision for opening of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in each of the rural districts across the country.

Details

- Government aims to provide required infrastructure in the remaining KVKs expeditiously.
- Considering the role and resources of a KVK, it caters to the requirement of the selected farmers of the district and provide capacity development support to State Development Departments.
- The coverage of entire district is the responsibility of development departments of State Governments.
- As many as 657 KVKs have administrative building and 521 KVKs have Farmers' hostel.
- As per requirement, large number of KVKs have been strengthened with other infrastructure facilities like, pulses seed hubs, soil testing kits, micro-irrigation systems, Integrated Farming Systems units, farm machineries and equipment, District Agro-Met Units, etc. during last five years.

NATIONAL DAIRY PLAN

In news

National Dairy Plan Phase I (NDP-I) a Central Sector Scheme (CSS) with an outlay of Rs. 2242 Crore was implemented during March 2012 to Nov 2019 across 18 major dairying states including Gujarat.

The objectives of NDP-I

- Increase productivity of milch animals and thereby increase milk production to meet the rapidly growing demand for milk.
- Provide rural milk producers with greater access to the organized milk processing sector.

Details

- The implementation of NDP I have established the fact that a scientifically planned integrated approach towards dairy development can indeed be successful in a large and diverse country like India.
- Under NDP-I, a study was conducted on Social inclusion impact of NDP I with regard to empowerment of Schedule Caste and Tribal population showed that the access of SC and ST communities to Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS) enrolment and services of automated Milk Collection Units (AMCUs) were found not to be significantly different to that of non-SC/ST households.
- NDP-I project had a significant positive impact on the livelihood opportunities for the tribal milk producers of Gujarat with the roll out of cooperative development interventions.

Brackishwater Aquaculture

In news

Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA), Chennai under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed breeding and seed production technology of Grey Mullet (Madavai) under controlled conditions.

Details

- Grey Mullet is a high-valued brackishwater fish and unavailability of sufficient seed was a hindrance for its culture. Mass-scale seed production benefits fish farmers for commercial farming of Grey Mullet in the coastal area.
- The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying is implementing a flagship scheme namely **“Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) - to bring about Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector in India”** with highest ever investment of Rs. 20,050 crore for a period of 5 years from financial year 2020-21 to 2024-25 in all States/Union Territories as a part of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Package and welfare of fishers, fish farmers and fish workers at the core of this scheme.
- PMMSY implemented by the Department of Fisheries *inter-alia* targets enhancement of fish production and export earnings.
- The activities relating to expansion of aquaculture area, intensification, diversification, supply of quality inputs, promoting technology infusion, disease management, training and skill development are supported under PMMSY to augment the fish production.
- Besides, PMMSY also focus on value addition, branding, leveling, traceability, organic fish farming and support for post harvest management are supported for enhancing export earnings.

The welfare related activities supported under the PMMSY primarily include

- Insurance cover for fishers, fish farmers, fish workers and fish vendors.

- Livelihood support and nutritional support for socio-economically backward active traditional fishers during fishing ban/lean period.
- Supply of boats and nets to traditional fishermen.
- Supply of safety kits for traditional and motorized fishing vessels.
- Supply of communications and Potential Fishing Zones devices for traditional motorized boats.
- Support for acquisition of technologically advanced fishing vessels for traditional fishermen, Up-gradation of existing fishing vessels.
- Open sea cage culture, ornamental fisheries, seaweed cultivation for creating alternative employment opportunities to coastal communities.
- Development of integrated modern fishing villages.
- Development of fishing harbours, landing centres, cold chain facilities, transport vehicles, marketing etc.

Operation Greens Scheme

In news

Ministry of Food Processing Industries launched Operation Greens scheme in November, 2018 for integrated development of Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP) value chain.

Objectives

- Enhancing value realisation of TOP farmers by targeted interventions to strengthen TOP production clusters and their FPOs, and linking/connecting them with the market.
- Price stabilisation for producers and consumers by proper production planning in the TOP clusters and introduction of dual use varieties.
- Reduction in post-harvest losses by creation of farm gate infrastructure, development of suitable agro-logistics, creation of appropriate storage capacity linking consumption centres.
- Increase in food processing capacities and value addition in TOP value chain with firm linkages with production clusters.
- Setting up of a market intelligence network to collect and collate real time data on demand and supply and price of TOP crops.

Details

- The scheme provides for short term intervention by way of providing transportation and storage subsidy @ 50% and long term intervention through value addition projects in identified production clusters with Grant-in-aid @ 35% to 70% of eligible project cost subject to maximum of Rs. 50 crore per project.
- Under the scheme, state-wise funds are not allocated as the scheme is demand driven and projects are approved as per scheme guidelines on the basis of applications received for setting up of projects in eligible production clusters.
- The crop-wise/state-wise specific funds are not earmarked under the scheme as the scheme is demand driven and projects are sanctioned in the identified production clusters on the basis of the applications received from investors against Expression of Interest (EOI) issued from time to time.

Aroma Mission

In news

Jammu & Kashmir heralds the '**Purple Revolution**' of India by taking a lead in the lavender cultivation in almost all the 20 districts of the Union Territory.

Details

- In particular, the districts of Kathua, Udhampur, Doda, Ramban, Kishtwar, Rajouri, Srinagar, Pulwama, Kupwara, Bandipora, Budgam, Ganderbal, Anantnag, Kulgam and Baramulla have made a huge headway in this direction, he observed.
- Delivering keynote address at the Special Webinar on Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Aroma Mission on the eve of India's 75th Independence Day.
- Aroma Mission, important medicinal and aromatic plants are being cultivated in 6,000 hectares of land.
- The Mission has generated 10 to 12 lakh man-days of rural employment and more than 500 tonnes of essential oil worth Rs.60 crores was produced during the last two years.
- The highlight of the programme was the participation of the Aroma Mission beneficiaries, such as the farmers who shared their experiences and thanked the CSIR for lending a helping hand.

National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm

In news

The Union Cabinet, has given its approval to launch a new Mission on Oil palm to be known as the National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) as a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme with a special focus on the North east region and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

About the scheme

- Due to the heavy dependence on imports for edible oils, it is important to make efforts for increasing the domestic production of edible oils in which increasing area and productivity of oil palm plays an important part.
- A financial outlay of Rs.11,040 crore has been made for the scheme, out of which Rs.8,844 crore is the Government of India share and Rs.2,196 crore is State share and this includes the viability gap funding also.
- Under this scheme, it is proposed to cover an additional area of 6.5 lakh hectare (ha.) for oil palm till the year 2025-26 and thereby reaching the target of 10 lakh hectares ultimately.
- The production of Crude Palm Oil (CPO) is expected to go upto 11.20 lakh tonnes by 2025-26 and upto 28 lakh tonnes by 2029-30.
- The scheme will immensely benefit the oil palm farmers, increase capital investment, create employment generation, shall reduce the import dependence and also increase the income of the farmers.
- For the first time, the Government of India will give a price assurance to the oil palm farmers for the FFBs. This will be known as the Viability Price (VP).
- This will protect the farmers from the fluctuations of the international CPO prices and protect him from the volatility.

Background

- Since 1991-92, many efforts have been made by the Government of India to increase the production of oilseeds and oil palm.
- The oilseeds production has increased from 275 lakh tons in 2014-15 to 365.65 lakh tons in 2020-21.
- For harnessing the potential of palm oil production, in the year 2020, an assessment has been made by the Indian institute of Oil Palm Research (IIOPR) for cultivation of oil palm which has given an assessment of around 28 lakh ha.
- Thus, there is huge potential in oil palm plantation and subsequently production of Crude Palm Oil (CPO).
- At present only 3.70 lakh hectares is under Oil Palm cultivation.
- Oil palm produces 10 to 46 times more oil per hectare compared to other oilseed crops and has yield of around 4 tons oil per ha.

- Thus, it has enormous potential for cultivation.

Defence India Startup Challenge 5.0

In news

Three years after the launch of Defence India Startup Challenge 1.0 (DISC), Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), will launch DISC 5.0 in New Delhi.

Details

- iDEX provides a platform for different stakeholders in the defence & aerospace sectors, essentially acting as an umbrella organisation to oversee technology development and potential collaborations in the specific field.
- With initiatives such as DISC and Open Challenges, iDEX is able to utilise the strong science, technology and research talent base of the country to develop new capabilities in defence innovation.
- DISC 5.0 will have more challenges than the first four DISC editions taken together.
- iDEX had been designed to infuse latest technology into military warfare closely intertwined with the needs of the Services and reduce dependence on imports.

Significance

- The launch of DISC 5.0 will be a massive leap towards leveraging the startup ecosystem to develop India's defence technologies, equipment design and manufacturing capabilities.
- These challenges will also encourage startups to become more attuned to innovative concepts and inculcate the approach of creative thinking in India's budding entrepreneurs.

Revival of North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited

In news

Cabinet approves revival of North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited.

Benefits

- Move will help ensuring remunerative price to the farmers of North Eastern Region for their products.
- With the implementation of the revival package, remunerative price to the farmers of NER of their products will be ensured.
- Revival package will help NERAMAC to implement various innovative plans namely providing better farming facilities, training to farmers in clusters, organic seeds and fertilizer, post harvesting facilities in order to promote the products of NE farmers in the world market through participation in events, registration of GI products etc.
- Revenue of the Corporation will increase and overheads will reduce as a result of VRS and other cost cutting measures and the Corporation will start making profits on sustained basis and its dependency on GoI loan will cease

Employment generation potential

After the implementation of revival of NERAMAC, employment will be generated both directly and indirectly in farming sector, projects and events management sector, logistics, sorting and grading and value addition, entrepreneurship and marketing. It is expected that employment will be generated for about 33,000 persons.

National Monetisation Pipeline tomorrow

In news

Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, will launch the National Monetisation Pipeline at New Delhi.

Details

- The National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) comprises a four-year pipeline of the Central Government's brownfield infrastructure assets.
- Besides providing visibility to investors, NMP will also serve as a medium-term roadmap for the Asset Monetisation initiative of the Government.
- It will serve as a medium-term roadmap for the Asset Monetisation initiative of the government, apart from providing visibility for the investors.
- An asset monetisation dashboard will also be created for tracking the progress and to provide visibility to investors
- A national monetisation plan of about Rs 6 trillion is in the offing which will have a range of assets from pipelines to power grid pipelines to national highways, ToT (toll-operate-transfer) and so on."

Vivad se Vishwas deadline for payment extended

In news

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has extended the deadline for making payments without additional amount under the Vivad se Vishwas scheme by a month till September 30. The deadline was originally scheduled to expire on August 31, 2021.

Details

- The Direct Tax 'Vivad se Vishwas' Act, 2020 was enacted on March 17, 2020, with the objective to reduce pending income tax litigation, generate timely revenue for the government and benefit taxpayers.
- The scheme not only provides an opportunity for taxpayers to evaluate all open litigations, but also a way to minimise final payout.
- Taxpayers can avail significant leverage on the waiver of interest and penalty being offered under the scheme.
- It may be beneficial for taxpayers to settle certain litigation matters such as one-time litigation cases, or cases where documentary evidence is lacking, cases where interest liability would be higher than the disputed tax, or cases where having duplicating tax impact (eg: litigation under section 40(a)(i) of the Act and litigation under section 201 of the Act) or cases pertaining to loss making companies where the losses are lapsing.

Science & Tech

Advanced Wound Dressing Material

In news

An Indian scientist has developed an advanced wound dressing based on agarose, a natural polymer derived from seaweed agar, for the treatment of infected diabetic wounds and patients suffering from chronic wounds.

Details

- This indigenous dressing will allow cost-effective dressings for chronic wound patients and will also pave the way for business incubation.
- The role of addition of several active molecules like sericin, iodine, and citric acid to this novel wound dressing has been evaluated along with agar in terms of their healing and containment property with regards to chronic wounds.
- The invention, in particular, provides agar dressing films for the treatment of infected diabetic wounds.
- The dressing may be used as a single layer, bilayer, or multi-layered hydrogel films depending on the severity and type of wound.

Way forward

- The next step would be to test its efficacy in the treatment of large wounds in big animals like rabbits or pigs.
- The final stage will include clinical trials. Following these steps, the technology can be commercialized in the market as single or all ingredient loaded uni/multilayer dressing material.

Significance

The advanced wound dressing market in India is largely monopolized by foreign companies. This indigenous dressing will not only allow cost-effective dressings for chronic wound patients but also will pave way for business incubation.

India's first bio-bank for heart failure research

In news

The first National Heart Failure Biobank (NHFB) in the country that would collect blood, biopsies, and clinical data as a guide to future therapies was inaugurated at the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST).

Details

- "There are no heart failure biobanks in the country, and this would greatly help in guiding future therapies and technologies and would benefit the heart failure patients significantly.
- The biobank will provide insights into heart diseases and heart failure among Indian children and adults, which are very different from that seen in the West.
- NHFB would prove very helpful in understanding molecular pathways and would improve the diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of Heart Failure.
- "It will open a new era in research in Heart Failure in India and will change the persona of diagnosis and treatment of heart failure patients.
- The facility will be useful for the research and treatment of post-covid heart failure.
- The increase in the observed prevalence of long-COVID symptoms and post-COVID heart failure calls for long-COVID clinics to collect patient data and biospecimens that can be biobank for future research.
- Through the NHFB, researchers can get access to well-annotated biological specimens linked to clinical data while maintaining appropriate standards of quality and security

Nano Urea

In news

National Fertilizers Limited (NFL) and Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Ltd (RCF) sign a MoU with IFFCO for the technology transfer for production of Nano Urea.

Details

- Nano Urea can enhance farmer's crop yields and save nitrogen to the extent of 50%, shows trials.
- The Nano-fertilizer holds great promise for application in plant nourishment because of the size-dependent qualities, high surface-volume ratio, and unique properties. Nano-fertilizers releases plant nutrients in a controlled manner contributing to higher nutrient use efficiency.
- Experimental trials of Nano Nitrogen (Nano urea developed by IFFCO) undertaken during Rabi/Zaid 2019-20 through National Agriculture Research System (NARS) at 7 ICAR research institute/state agricultural Universities on different crops like Paddy, Wheat, Mustard, Maize, Tomato, Cabbage, Cucumber, Capsicum, Onion etc.
- IFFCO has sought permission from the Department of Fertilizers for export of Nano Urea (liquid) manufactured from its Nano Fertilizer Plant facility set up at Kalol, Gujarat.

Converting paddy stubble into bio-manure

In news

Steps taken by the Government for awareness about the new low-cost capsule which can convert the paddy stubble into bio-manure.

Details

- Government provides capsule kits to the farmers of 25 states during 2020-21.
- IARI has licensed the technology to 12 companies for mass multiplication and marketing of the Pusa Decomposer.

About the decomposer

- The decomposers are in the **form of capsules** made by extracting **fungi strains** that help the paddy straw to **decompose at a much faster rate** than usual.
- It takes around 20 days for the degradation process to be completed
- This would then rule out the need to burn the stubble, and also help in retaining the essential microbes and nutrients in soil that are otherwise damaged when the residue is burned.

Porous carbon nano-particles

In news

Using porous carbon nanoparticles from waste onion peels, a team of scientists have developed soft robotic actuators with enhanced photomechanical capacity.

Details

- The actuators can act as efficient traps for the illuminating low-power near-infrared (NIR) light and can convert a control signal into mechanical motion with bioengineering applications such as drug delivery, wearable and assistive devices, prostheses, and even artificial organs.
- Soft robots or actuators consisting of rubber-like polymer with embedded nanomaterials which convert a source of energy to mechanical motion have been gaining much interest with targeted applications in areas including bio-medical, military, and remote space operations.
- Generation of predesigned motion facilitated by their flexibility, affordability, and easy customization are the main reasons for such interest.
- The high thermal conductivity of these nanoforms results in rapid distribution of the heat generated locally by thermal and photo-thermal stimuli.

- To take these actuators to the next level of development, heat traps can be created to capture and contain the generated heat for slightly longer durations such that the achieved photomechanical actuation can be enhanced.
- ***The team also found with an additional ultrathin (30 nm) gold layer, the actuation magnitude could be more than doubled, and more importantly, bidirectional photo-controlled face-sensitive movement realized.***

IndiGau, India's first Cattle Genomic Chip

In news

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh released "IndiGau", India's first Cattle Genomic Chip for the conservation of pure varieties of indigenous cattle breeds like Gir, Kankrej, Sahiwal, Ongole etc.

Highlights

- IndiGau is purely indigenous and the largest cattle chip of the world with 11,496 markers
- The Chip to achieve the goal of conservation of our own breeds with better characters and help towards doubling of farmers' income by 2022
- This chip will have practical utility in the Governments schemes to achieve the goal of conservation of our own breeds with better characters and help towards doubling of farmers' income by 2022.
- To further the use of this chip in generating phenotypic and genotypic correlations, NIAB has entered into a collaborative agreement with National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).
- NIAB has also entered into a MoU with private industry to generate capability within India for designing and making our own SNP chips.
- These may be very low density SNP chips in the beginning and slowly this technology can be further strengthened for bigger chips, making India self-reliant in this field.

Significance

- Since NDDB has well organized presence in the field for collection of phenotypic record, NIAB and NDDB complement each other to undertake this research for generating information for low density SNP chip for any important trait detection, like high milk yield or heat tolerance etc.
- This will eventually help in elite bull selection and improvement of productivity characters of Indian cattle.

Technology for the production of Lithium Iron Phosphate

In news

A new indigenous technology for the production of cathode material for Lithium-ion Batteries (LiBs) may soon make such batteries for electric vehicles cheaper.

Details

- The cost of cathode materials contributes significantly towards the overall cost of LiBs, and India is heavily dependent on the import of these materials.
- International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI), an Autonomous R&D Centre of Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India, has developed indigenous technology for the production of
- Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) cathode material for Li-ion Batteries (LiBs) at its Centre for Nanomaterials.
- ARCI and Allox Minerals, a Hyderabad based company, signed an Agreement for Know-How Transfer on August 12, 2021.

- The cost of cathode materials contributes significantly towards the overall cost of LiBs, and as India is heavily dependent on import of these materials, it became essential to indigenously develop a technology for the manufacture of electrode materials and support industrial organizations in LIB technology.

Cave lion cub found in Siberian permafrost

In news

Scientists have said that an astonishingly well-preserved cave lion cub found in Siberia's permafrost lived 28,000 years ago and may even still have traces of its mother's milk in it.

Details

- The female cub, named Sparta, was found at the Semyuelyakh River in Russia's Yakutia region in 2018 and a second lion cub called Boris was found the year before, according to a study published in Quaternary.
- The cubs were found 15 metres apart but are not only from different litters but were also born thousands of years apart.
- Boris, a male cub, lived around 43,448 years ago.
- The two cubs aged 1-2 months were found by mammoth tusk collectors.
- Two other lion cubs named Uyan and Dina have also been found in the region in recent years.

Permafrost

- It is any ground that remains completely frozen—32°F (0°C) or colder—for at least two years straight.
- These permanently frozen grounds are most common in regions with high mountains and in Earth's higher latitudes—near the North and South Poles.
- Permafrost covers large regions of the Earth. Almost a quarter of the land area in the Northern Hemisphere has permafrost underneath.
- Although the ground is frozen, permafrost regions are not always covered in snow.

Advanced Chaff Technology for Indian Air Force

In news

Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed an Advanced Chaff Technology to safeguard fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) against hostile radar threats.

Details

- Defence Laboratory Jodhpur, a DRDO laboratory developed the advanced Chaff material and chaff cartridge-118/I in collaboration with High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL).
- The Indian Air Force has started the process of induction of this technology after completion of successful user trials.
- To ensure survivability of aircraft, Counter Measure Dispensing System (CMDS) is used which provides passive jamming against Infra-Red and radar threats.
- Chaff is a critical defence technology used to protect fighter aircraft from hostile radar threats.
- The importance of this technology lies in the fact that very less quantity of chaff material deployed in the air acts as decoy to deflect enemy's missiles for ensuring safety of the fighter aircraft.
- The technology has been given to the industry for production in large quantities to meet the annual rolling requirement of the Indian Air Force

Geological Survey of India Mobile App

In news

Geological Survey of India, the 170-year old premier Geological Institution under the Ministry of Mines has decided to make itself accessible to the masses and make its presence felt digitally by launching the GSI Mobile App (Beta Version) in the year 2020 and upgrading it periodically.

Details

- Through the App, people will become more enlightened about various facets of GSI activities.
- It is also in line with the Digital India campaign initiated by the Central Government.
- The App is available for Android platform as of now and can be downloaded from Google Play Store.

About the app

- The App is divided into various sections where it talks about the legacy of GSI, the in-house publications of the organisation, various case studies on different missions of GSI, the picture gallery etc.
- E-news division updates masses about the latest news as far as the organization is concerned in terms of work and the career opportunities as well as the training facilities that are available with GSI.
- It also deals with various maps, videos and downloads of GSI work.
- The e-book section would give the masses an idea of the exploration works done by GSI.
- It connects the YouTube, Facebook and Twitter pages of GSI from the app as well.
- This App will be further upgraded for higher versions of Android OS and for iOS compatible mobiles (i-Phones) and many more features will be added in the near future.

Background

- The Geological Survey of India (GSI) was set up in 1851 primarily to find coal deposits for the Railways.
- Over the years, GSI has not only grown into a repository of geo-science information required in various fields in the country but has also attained the status of a geo-scientific organisation of international repute.
- Its main functions relate to creating and updating of national geoscientific information and mineral resource assessment.
- These objectives are achieved through ground surveys, air-borne and marine surveys, mineral prospecting and investigations, multi-disciplinary geoscientific, geo-technical, geo-environmental and natural hazards studies, glaciology, seism tectonic study, and carrying out fundamental research.

India to Add 35 More Earthquake Observatories

In news

India is going to have 35 more earthquake Observatories by end of this year and 100 more such Observatories in next five years.

Details

- In last six and a half decades since Independence, the country had only 115 Earthquake Observatories.
- Importance of the Geology as a recognized science of the composition, structure and processes, which govern our planet, has probably reached its zenith today as human society grapples with challenges at multiple levels of interactions with the Mother Earth.
- International Association of Seismology and Physics of the Earth's Interior (IASPEI) will act as a catalyst in bringing on board a greater number of researchers and practitioners from global community to work on issues related to rendering science to society.

- The linkage between the deep earth structure and geomagnetism, and the role of fluids in earthquake nucleation are a few examples to emphasize the significance of the Joint Scientific Assembly of these two Associations to promote cross-disciplinary research.

Future Earthquake-resistant Buildings

In news

Thermocol could be the material of the future for construction of earthquake-resistant buildings, with thermal insulation and could also save energy required to develop construction materials.

Details

- Researchers at IIT Roorkee have found that thermocol or Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) is used as a composite material in core of reinforced concrete sandwich, could resist earthquake forces on up to four-storey buildings.
- The researchers tested a full-scale building and a number of wall elements constructed with thermocol sandwiched between two layers of concrete at the National Seismic Test Facility (NSTF) of the Department of Earthquake Engineering, IIT Roorkee, developed under Fund for Improvement of S&T Infrastructure (FIST) programme of Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India.
- The investigation was supplemented with detailed computer simulation of a realistic 4-storey building.

The technique

- In this technique, the EPS core and the wire mesh reinforcement is produced in a factory.
- The building skeleton is first erected from the factory-made core and reinforcement panels, and then concrete is sprayed on the skeleton core.
- This technique does not require any shuttering and hence can be constructed very fast.

Significance

- Besides resisting earthquakes, the use of expanded polystyrene core in concrete walls of a building can result in thermal comfort.
- The core provides the necessary insulation against the heat transfer between building interior and exterior environment.
- This can help in keeping the building interiors cool in hot environments and warm during cold conditions.
- India suffers a large variation of temperature in different parts of the country and during different seasons of the year.
- Therefore, thermal comfort is a crucial consideration along with structural safety.
- The technology also has the potential of saving construction material and energy, with an overall reduction in carbon footprint of buildings.
- It replaces a large portion of concrete volume from the walls and floor/roof.

Crape materials to be used for the repair of aero-engine

In news

Indigenously developed powders from unused scrape materials to be used for the repair of aero-engine components made of Ni-based super alloy.

Details

- Indian Scientists have for the first time repaired aero-engine components through emerging additive manufacturing or 3D printing technique called Directed Energy Deposition process that can significantly reduce repair costs and overhaul time.
- They indigenously made powders suitable for the additive manufacturing process called the Directed Energy Deposition process.
- Ni-based superalloys are widely used in aero-engine components.
- Despite having exceptional properties, they are prone to damage due to extreme operational conditions.
- Manufacturing defects during the casting or machining process are another major cause of rejection, and tons of such unused components are scrapped due to minor defects.

Technology

- The ARCI team developed a technology to refurbish pinion housing assembly (critical component in helicopters used for power transmission to the main fan) by machining out the damaged layer and rebuilding it using laser cladding process followed by final machining.
- Laser cladding and Laser-DED (both processes) are the same.
- In general, for two-dimensional deposition (surface coating), the term **laser cladding** is used, and for the manufacture of three-dimensional parts, the term **laser-DED** is used.
- A post-clad heat treatment method was also designed to minimize microstructural inhomogeneity and ensure minimal substrate properties variation.
- These laser-clad repaired prototypes were found to be free from distortion and exhibited excellent performance.
- The team has also developed repair and refurbishment technologies for other industrial sectors, such as refurbishing diesel engine cylinder heads made of grey cast iron and refurbishing shafts used in the refinery.

Advanced oxidation technology

In news

A new technology may soon enhance the reuse of waste water in an affordable and sustainable manner.

About the technology

- The technology which uses UV-Photocatalysis can treat municipal sewage and highly polluting industrial wastewater streams and increase its reuse as a technological option in industrial as well as municipal wastewater treatments.
- With ever-increasing water crisis, it becomes imperative for industries & utilities to reuse **'treated water'**.
- However, the current treatment practices are inefficient because of high dependence on biological treatment systems, which are unable to bear shock loads.
- This is followed by tertiary treatment systems involving RO and Multi Effect Evaporators (MEE).
- These systems have large carbon footprint and maintenance costs making the wastewater treatment highly unsustainable and unaffordable.
- These researchers have felt the need to integrate novel approaches and advanced technologies in current systems.
- The technology supported by the Water Technology Initiative (WTI) of the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India involves UV-Photocatalysis as an Advanced Oxidation Process (AOP) at the secondary treatment stage leading to oxidative degradation and mineralization of targeted pollutants.
- It improves biodegradability, thereby preventing bio-fouling of membranes and enhancing life span and efficiency of RO systems as also overall load on evaporators like Multiple Effect Evaporators and Mechanical vapor recompression (MVR), and so on.

- It can reduce Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), dissolved organics, pathogens, Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), and Micropollutants.

Three Super-massive Black Holes Merging Together in Our Nearby Universe

In news

Indian researchers have discovered three supermassive black holes from three galaxies merging together to form a triple active galactic nucleus, a compact region at the center of a newly discovered galaxy that has a much-higher-than-normal luminosity.

Details

- This rare occurrence in our nearby Universe indicates that small merging groups are ideal laboratories to detect multiple accreting supermassive black holes and increases the possibility of detecting such rare occurrences.
- Supermassive black holes are difficult to detect because they do not emit any light.
- But they can reveal their presence by interacting with their surroundings.
- When the dust and gas from the surroundings fall onto a supermassive black hole, some of the mass is swallowed by the black hole, but some of it is converted into energy and emitted as electromagnetic radiation that makes the black hole appear very luminous.
- They are called active galactic nuclei (AGN) and release huge amounts of ionized particles and energy into the galaxy and its environment.
- Both of these ultimately contribute to the growth of the medium around the galaxy and ultimately the evolution of the galaxy itself.

Evolution

- According to the researchers, a major factor impacting galaxy evolution is galaxy interactions, which happen when galaxies move close by each other and exert tremendous gravitational forces on each other.
- During such galaxy interactions, the respective supermassive black holes can get near each other.
- The dual black holes start consuming gas from their surroundings and become dual AGN.
- The IIA team explains that if two galaxies collide, their black hole will also come closer by transferring the kinetic energy to the surrounding gas.
- The distance between the blackholes decreases with time until the separation is around a parsec (3.26 light-years).
- The two black holes are then unable to lose any further kinetic energy in order to get even closer and merge.
- This is known as the final parsec problem. The presence of a third black hole can solve this problem.
- The dual merging blackholes can transfer their energy to the third blackhole and merge with each other.

MANTHAN- 2021 hackathon

In news

MoE's Innovation Cell, AICTE and BPR&D launched MANTHAN- 2021 hackathon.

Details

- Young innovative minds and Start-ups will find indigenous solutions for National Security.
- Manthan- 2021 is organized by Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) in coordination with the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education and AICTE.
- This MANTHAN Hackathon is very crucial as it has direct application in strengthening our national security.

- A large number of youngsters will participate in this initiative and will help BPR&D to identify best of the minds and ideas from our country.'
- Hackathon "**MANTHAN 2021**" is a unique national initiative to identify innovative concepts and technology solutions for addressing the security challenges of the 21st century faced by our intelligence agencies.

Health & Medicine

Bio Bank of Ayurveda at AIIA

In news

AYUSH minister assure all help in establishing world's 1st bio bank of Ayurveda at AIIA.

Biobank

- It is a type of biorepository that stores biological samples (usually human) for use in research.
- Biobanks have become an important resource in medical research, supporting many types of contemporary research like genomics and personalized medicine.
- Biobanks can give researchers access to data representing a large number of people.
- Samples in biobanks and the data derived from those samples can often be used by multiple researchers for cross purpose research studies.
- For example, many diseases are associated with single-nucleotide polymorphisms.
- Genome-wide association studies using data from tens or hundreds of thousands of individuals can identify these genetic associations as potential disease biomarkers.
- Many researchers struggled to acquire sufficient samples prior to the advent of biobanks.

About the institute

- The unique feature of AIIA's Panchkarm for Children and Panchkarma for the eyes was also appreciated by the Ministers.
- The All India Institute of Ayurveda has been conceived as an Apex Institute for Ayurveda. It aims at bringing a synergy between Traditional Wisdom of Ayurveda and Modern tools and technology.
- The institute would offer postgraduate and doctoral courses in various disciplines of Ayurveda and will focus on fundamental research of Ayurveda, drug development, standardization, quality control, safety evaluation and scientific validation of Ayurvedic medicine.

Ayurveda

"AYURVEDA" is made up of two words- *Ayuh* and *Veda*. *Ayuh* means life and *Veda* means knowledge or science. Thus "AYURVEDA" in totality means 'Science of life'. It incorporates all aspects of life whether physical, psychological, spiritual or social. What is beneficial and what is harmful to life, what is happy life and what is sorrowful life; all these four questions and life span allied issues are elaborately and emphatically discussed in Ayurveda.

Ecology & Environment

Hydrogen Fuel Cell based Train

In news

On a mission mode towards Green Railways, Indian Railways Organisation of Alternative Fuels (IROAF) invite bids for Hydrogen Fuel Cell based Train on Indian Railways Network

Details

- The project shall kick off the concept of Hydrogen Mobility in the Country
- Initially, the bids are invited for 89km Sonapat-Jind section of Northern Railway
- Initially, 2 DEMU rakes will be converted and later, 2 Hybrid locos will be converted based on Hydrogen Fuel cell power movement
- “Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Batteries” and “National Hydrogen Mission” are two flagship programs of Government of India so as to meet out the targets of reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emission under Paris Climate Agreement 2015 and “Mission Net Zero Carbon Emission Railway” by 2030.

Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC)

- ACCs are the **new generation of advanced storage technologies that can store electric energy either as electrochemical or as chemical energy** and convert it back to electric energy as and when required.
- Such battery storages will **cater not only to electric vehicles but also to the consumer electronics** industry and electricity grids.

National Hydrogen Mission

- Being a zero-carbon fuel, hydrogen is considered to be one of the key sources of clean energy for the future.
- This fuel can be produced from various sources like natural gas, nuclear power, biomass, and renewable power like solar and wind.
- There are three types of hydrogen – grey, blue and green.
- The fuel produced from fossil fuels is called grey hydrogen, those produced from fossil fuels with carbon capture and storage options are called blue hydrogen, while those produced from renewable power sources are called green hydrogen.

Four more sites of India added to Ramsar list

In news

Four more wetlands from India get recognition from the Ramsar Secretariat as Ramsar sites

New sites

- These sites are Thol and Wadhvana from Gujarat and Sultanpur and Bhindawas from Haryana.
- With this, the number of Ramsar sites in India are 46 and the surface area covered by these sites is now 1,083,322 hectares.
- While Haryana gets its first Ramsar sites, Gujarat gets three more after Nalsarovar which was declared in 2012.

Ramsar

- The aim of the Ramsar list is “to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits”

- Wetlands provide a wide range of important resources and ecosystem services such as food, water, fibre, groundwater recharge, water purification, flood moderation, erosion control and climate regulation.
- They are, in fact, are a major source of water and our main supply of freshwater comes from an array of wetlands which help soak rainfall and recharge groundwater.

Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary

- The largest wetland in Haryana is a human-made freshwater wetland.
- Over 250 bird species use the sanctuary throughout the year as a resting and roosting site.
- The site supports more than ten globally threatened species including the endangered Egyptian Vulture, Steppe Eagle, Pallas's Fish Eagle, and Black-bellied Tern.

Sultanpur National Park from Haryana

- It supports more than 220 species of resident, winter migratory and local migratory waterbirds at critical stages of their life cycles.
- More than ten of these are globally threatened, including the critically endangered sociable lapwing, and the endangered Egyptian Vulture, Saker Falcon, Pallas's Fish Eagle and Black-bellied Tern.

Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary from Gujarat

- It lies on the Central Asian Flyway and more than 320 bird species can be found here.
- The wetland supports more 30 threatened waterbird species, such as the critically endangered White-rumped Vulture and Sociable Lapwing, and the vulnerable Sarus Crane, Common Pochard and Lesser White-fronted Goose.

Wadhvana Wetland from Gujarat

- It is internationally important for its birdlife as it provides wintering ground to migratory waterbirds, including over 80 species that migrate on the Central Asian Flyway.
- They include some threatened or near-threatened species such as the endangered Pallas's fish-Eagle, the vulnerable Common Pochard, and the near-threatened Dalmatian Pelican, Grey-headed Fish-eagle and Ferruginous Duck.

Pilot project on Hydrogen Blending

In news

NTPC Limited, India's largest integrated power generating company under Ministry of Power has floated a global Expression of Interest (EoI) to set up a Pilot Project on Hydrogen Blending with Natural Gas in City Gas Distribution (CGD) Network in India.

Details

- The EoI follows the recent tenders floated by NTPC REL for green hydrogen fuelling station at Leh and NTPC VidyutVyapar Nigam Limited (NVVN) for procurement of Fuel Cell Buses.
- A dedicated 1.25 MW Solar plant is also being set up at Leh by NTPC REL to power the hydrogen fuelling station.
- This pilot on hydrogen blending with natural gas will be the first of its kind in India and would explore the viability of decarbonizing India's natural gas grid.
- NTPC is keen on playing a key role in India's transition to hydrogen economy would later take this up at a commercial scale across India.
- The successful execution of the pilot will also demonstrate the decarbonization objective along with import substitution aim under the government's 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan'.

- NTPC Limited is also keenly exploring production of green ammonia to decarbonize the fertilizer industry and possibly fulfil government's upcoming mandate of using certain percentage of green hydrogen in fertilizer and refinery sector.

Vriksharopan Abhiyan – 2021

In news

Vriksharopan Abhiyan - 2021" of Coal Ministry to be Launched on 19th August, 2021 as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Celebrations

About the programme

- An Important Step Towards Enhancing Green Cover In and Around Coalfields and for Environmental Sustainability in Mining Operations.
- It is expected that more than 300 plantation sites in and around coalfields across the country will be connected during the *Abhiyan on 19th* through live Video Conferencing.
- **Vriksharopan Abhiyan 2021**, which is one of the key events of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** celebrations in the coal sector, will surely bring environment sustainability in mining operations and help coal sector obtain social and environmental licence to operate, which will be very crucial in coming days when more mines will be opened up involving new players.
- Also, the Abhiyan is expected to sensitize and motivate the society and common people to take up more and more afforestation initiatives in their neighbouring areas.

Coal sector in India

- India, as a fast emerging economy, faces the twin challenges of fulfilling its commitments for decarbonizing the energy sector on the one hand and on the other, meeting the country's rising energy demand, which would primarily be reliant on coal due to its affordability and substantial indigenous availability.
- Thus, our coal sector has to play a very crucial role in the foreseeable future in fulfilling the country's energy demand for meeting various developmental needs, at the same time, be responsible towards the environment and the society.
- In this backdrop, India's coal sector has been taking several innovative initiatives to promote sustainable mining.

One of the key initiatives has been "**Go Greening**" drive in and around mining areas thereby not only ameliorating the local ecosystem but also creating additional carbon sink to mitigate the causes of climate change. Further, our coal companies are also aiming to achieve **carbon neutrality** through various environment friendly measures such as extensive plantation and adoption of clean coal technologies.

Ratification of Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol

In news

Cabinet approves Ratification of Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer for phase down of Hydrofluorocarbons

Benefits

- HFC phasedown is expected to prevent the greenhouse gas emissions, helping prevent climate change and would benefit the people.
- The industry producing and consuming Hydrofluorocarbons will be phasing out Hydrofluorocarbons as per the agreed schedule under and transition to non-HFC and low global warming potential technologies.

Major Impact, including employment generation potential

- Hydrofluorocarbons. phasedown is expected to prevent the emission of up to 105 million tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent of greenhouse gases, helping to avoid up to 0.5 degree Celsius of global temperature rise by 2100, while continuing to protect the ozone layer.
- Implementation of HFC phase down under the Kigali Amendment through the adoption of low-global warming potential and energy-efficient technologies will achieve energy efficiency gains^ and carbon dioxide emissions reduction - a "climate co-benefit,"
- HFCs phase down implementation will involve synergies with on-going government programmes and schemes of the Government of India with the objective to maximize the economic and social co-benefits, besides environmental gains.
- There would be scope for domestic manufacturing of equipment as well as alternative non-HFC and low-global warming potential chemicals to enable the industry to transition to the low global warming potential alternatives as per the agreed HFC phase down schedule. In addition, there would be opportunities to promote domestic innovation for new generation alternative refrigerants and related technologies.

Details

- Under the Kigali Amendment; Parties to the Montreal Protocol will phase down production and consumption of Hydrofluorocarbons, commonly known as HFCs.
- Hydrofluorocarbons were introduced as non-ozone depleting alternative to Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). While HFCs do not deplete the stratospheric ozone layer, they have high global warming potential ranging from 12 to 14,000, which have adverse impact on climate.
- Recognizing the growth in use of HFCs, especially in Refrigeration and Air-conditioning sector the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, reached agreement at their 28th Meeting of the Parties (MOP) held in October 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda to add HFCs to the list of controlled substances and approved a timeline for their gradual reduction by 80-85 per cent by the late 2040s.
- India will complete its phase down of HFCs in 4 steps from 2032 onwards with cumulative reduction of 10% in 2032, 20% in 2037, 30% in 2042 and 80% in 2047.
- All amendments and adjustments of the Montreal Protocol, prior to the Kigali Amendment have Universal support.

Background

- The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, is an international environmental treaty for protection of the Ozone Layer by phasing out the production and consumption of man-made chemicals referred to as ozone depleting substances (ODS). The stratospheric ozone layer protects humans and the environment from harmful levels of ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
- India became a Party to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer on 19 June 1992 and since then has ratified the amendments to the Montreal Protocol. Though the present approval of the Cabinet, India will be ratifying the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol for phase down of Hydrofluorocarbons.
- India has successfully met the phase out targets of all the Ozone Depleting Substances as per the Montreal Protocol Schedule.

COP26 to be held in Glasgow in November

In news

India extends full support to the UK for a successful COP26 to be held in Glasgow in November.

Details

- The world needs higher concrete actions in terms of climate finance and technology transfer by the developed countries.
- India believes that Climate actions must be nationally determined and strongly advocates that the differentiation and operationalization of flexibility provided in the UNFCCC and the Paris
- Agreement for developing countries should be at the core of decision-making.
- The world needs higher concrete actions in terms of climate finance and technology transfer by the developed countries.

COP

- The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention.
- All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, at which they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and take decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements.

Vriksharopan Abhiyan -2021

In news

There cannot be any bigger service to nature and humanity than to plant as many saplings as possible.

Highlights

- Vriksharopan Abhiyan was launched which will spread awareness about tree plantation amongst employees, society stakeholders and motivate everyone to nurture plants in their vicinity and beautify our landscapes.
- During the programme, two eco-parks were inaugurated namely **Mudwani Dam Eco-park** of Northern Coal fields Limited in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh and **Mine -II Eco-Park** of NLC India Ltd, Neyveli, Tamil Nadu and foundation stone was laid for two parks, namely **Jhanjra Eco-Park** of Eastern Coalfields Limited in Pachim Bardhaman, West Bengal & **Chandrashekhara Azad Orient UG No. 4 Eco-Park** of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited in Jharsuguda, Odisha.
- These eco-parks/tourism sites would provide avenues for recreation, adventure, water sport, bird watching etc. for the people residing in nearby areas and will be integrated to form part of local tourism circuit.

Solar Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station

In news

The Delhi-Chandigarh Highway has become the first e-vehicle friendly highway in the country, with a network of Solar-based Electric Vehicle Charging stations (SEVCs) set up by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) under the FAME-1 [Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) & Electric Vehicles in India] scheme of the Ministry of Heavy Industries.

Details

- India is a vibrant voice of environment security which comprises climate change, energy conservation, clean energy transition efforts, etc. and the nation's efforts in environment have started giving desired results.
- This is an important step in the direction of achieving the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, he added.
- The EV charging station at Karnal lake resort, is strategically located at the midpoint of Delhi-Chandigarh highway, and is equipped to cater to all types of E- cars plying currently in the country.
- The establishment of similar EV chargers at regular intervals of 25-30 kms. on the highway will allay range-anxiety among Electric Vehicle users and bolster their confidence for inter-city travel.

- The SEVC stations are equipped with individual grid-connected rooftop solar plants that will supply green and clean energy to the charging stations.

Stockholm Water Week's

In news

The Safe Water Network, USAID and WRI India jointly convened the session on 'Making Cities Water Positive Through City Water Balance Plan' in Stockholm Water Week's first day.

Details

- Making Cities Water Positive through City Water Balance Plan e-Toolkit' was launched comprising 7 modules and 29 tools to assist the decision makers in developing and implementing solutions for making Cities Water Positive.
- The key feature of Water Resource Efficiency focused on solving the leadership crisis issue by involving app-based approach to create 14000 leaders at community level.
- They were trained on creating awareness and practicing self-monitoring system with focus on rainwater harvesting system, water availability and so on.

World Water Week in Stockholm

- World Water Week in Stockholm is a week-long global water conference held each year in late August or early September.
- Known as World Water Week, the event is organized and led by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).
- Events and conference sessions address a wide range of the world's water, development and sustainability issues and related concerns of international development.

History

- The World Water Week in Stockholm originally began as the Stockholm Water Symposium in 1991 and has been convened annually ever since.
- In 2001, the official name became World Water Week in Stockholm.
- SIWI identifies a conference theme to place a specific focus on one aspect of the world's escalating water crisis.
- Initially, one theme was promoted for 4–5 years.
- Since 2008, a different theme has been selected for each year.

Glaciers in Zaskar Valley

In news

The Pensilungpa Glacier (PG), located in Zaskar, Ladakh, is retreating, and a recent study has attributed the retreat to an increase in the temperature and decrease in precipitation during winters.

About the study

- Since 2015, the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), Dehradun, has been working on various aspects on glaciology, i.e., glacier health (mass balance) monitoring, dynamics; discharge, past climatic conditions, speculation for future climate change and its impact on glaciers in this region.
- A team of scientists from the institute ventured to study the less explored region of the Himalayas, i.e., Zaskar, Ladakh.

- The study suggests that due to continuous rise in the air temperature in line with the global trend, the melting would increase, and it is possible that the precipitation of summer periods at higher altitudes will change from snow to rain, and that may influence the summer and winter pattern.
- The study also points at the significant influence of debris cover on the mass balance and retreat of the glacier's endpoint, especially in summer. Furthermore, the mass balance data for the last 3 years (2016–2019) showed a negative trend with a small accumulation area ratio.

International Relation

IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) Tourism Ministers' virtual meet

In news

India organized the IBSA Tourism Ministers' Meeting to promote tourism cooperation among the member states and reviewed the intra IBSA Tourism cooperation.

Aim

The aim of the IBSA Tripartite Agreement is for strengthening relations between the member countries for economic development and for promoting cooperation in the field of tourism and expansion of tourism relations with a view to understand and appreciate each other's history, culture and way of life.

Details

- The IBSA Tourism Ministers' Meeting recognized the importance of strengthening cooperation in tourism to overcome the impact of Covid 19 pandemic on the tourism sector.
- The Ministers resolved to work together to realise the full potential of IBSA countries through cooperation in the tourism sector.
- The significant aspect of the meeting was the adoption of the IBSA Tourism Ministers Joint Statement, an outcome document on cooperation and promotion for speedy recovery of travel and tourism.
- IBSA is a trilateral, developmental initiative between the Government of India, The Government of Federative Republic of Brazil and The Government of the Republic of South Africa to promote South-South cooperation and exchange.

BRICS Partnership for Strengthening Agro Biodiversity

In news

The Ministers of Agriculture of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa deliberated virtually on the theme ***"BRICS Partnership for Strengthening Agro Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition Security"***.

Details

- The implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development noted that BRICS countries are well positioned to take a leading role in helping to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals to eradicate hunger and poverty.
- The strong agricultural research base in BRICS countries and the need to harness and share knowledge, facilitate transfer of technologies from lab to land to provide improved solutions for enhanced productivity,

especially in the face of climate change, maintaining agro biodiversity and ensuring sustainable use of natural resources was acknowledged.

- BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) Agriculture Research Platform has been developed by India to promote cooperation in the areas of agricultural research, extension, technology transfer, training and capacity building.
- The intention to make the BRICS Agriculture Research Platform functional and encourage research cooperation to improve the use and application of agricultural technologies for meeting the needs of producers and processors was also expressed.

AUSTRALIA – INDIA NAVY TO NAVY RELATIONSHIP

In news

A 'Joint Guidance for the Australia – India Navy to Navy Relationship' document was signed between the Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy today, 18 August 2021.

Details

- The document is aligned to the '2020 Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' agreed by the Prime Ministers and aims to ensure shared approach to regional and global security challenges.
- The Joint Guidance would serve as a guideline document to showcase the intent of both the Navies to work together bi/ multi-laterally.
- The broad scope of the guidance is focussed on developing mutual understanding, cooperate for regional security, collaborate in mutually beneficial activities and to develop interoperability.
- The highlights of document include close cooperation in regional and multilateral fora, including Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Expert Working Groups subordinate to the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus framework.
- Bilateral defence relations between India and Australia have strengthened over the years.
- 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership', Mutual Logistics Support Agreement, conduct of trilateral Maritime Security Workshop and RAN participation in Exercise MALABAR are significant milestones which underline the role played by both Navies in bolstering this relationship in recent times. The document would be pivotal in consolidating the shared commitment to promote peace, security, stability and prosperity in the Indo - Pacific region.

Tokyo Paralympics

In news

54 Paralympics athletes to represent India and begin their journey for the medals at Tokyo Paralympics on 25th August

Details

- All 54 athletes are part of Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).
- 54 athletes from India will be competing in 9 sports disciplines including Archery, Athletics (Track and Field), Badminton, Swimming, Weightlifting among others.
- This is the biggest-ever contingent India has sent to any Paralympics.
- Bhavina and Sonalben start their qualification rounds in Tokyo on the opening day, i.e, August 25. They are a part of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) Core group.
- Aruna will participate in the Women's under 49kg K44 category. She will be in action on September 2 from the round-of-16 rounds. She is a part of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).

- Sakina, who will participate in the women's up to 50kg category, is the only Indian woman paralympian to ever win a Commonwealth Games medal.
- **Bhutan and Guyana are both sending athletes for the first time.**

About the Game

- Since the 1988 Seoul Games, the Olympics and Paralympics have shared a host city and sporting venues.
- This marks the second time Tokyo will host the Paralympics — following a turn in 1964 — with 539 events across 22 sports scheduled between Aug. 24 and Sept. 5.

Schemes & Policies, Social Issues

Samagra Shiksha Scheme 2.0' to continue till 2026

In News

- The Centre has approved the continuation of the 'Samagra Shiksha Scheme' for school education for the next five years till March 31, 2026.
- The scheme has also been revamped now with the addition of new Components/initiatives based on the recommendations of the NEP 2020.

Samagra Shiksha

- Samagra Shiksha is an integrated scheme for school education extending from pre-school to class XII to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education.
- It subsumes the three Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).
- The main emphasis of the Scheme is on improving the quality of school education by focussing on the two T's – Teacher and Technology.
- The scheme mainly aims to support States in the implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009.
- The Scheme is being implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

Components of the Scheme

- In order to enhance the direct outreach of the scheme, all child-centric interventions will be provided directly to the students through DBT [or direct benefit transfer] mode on an IT-based platform over a period of time.
- This DBT would include RTE entitlements such as textbooks, uniforms and transport allowance.
- Keeping with the NEP's recommendations on encouraging Indian languages, it has a new component for appointment of language teachers, which includes salaries, and training costs as well as bilingual books and teaching learning material.
- It will have the NIPUN Bharat initiative for foundational literacy and numeracy, which will get an annual provision of ₹500 per child for learning materials, ₹150 per teacher for manuals and resources and ₹10-20 lakh per district for assessment.
- As part of digital initiatives, there is a provision for ICT labs and smart classrooms, including support for digital boards, virtual classrooms and DTH channels.

PM-DAKSH

In news

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar will launch 'PM-DAKSH' Portal and 'PM-DAKSH' Mobile App.

About the Portal

- M-DAKSH' Portal will make all information related to skill development programmes, provided under Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana, available at one place for Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes and SafaiKaramcharis
- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, in collaboration with NeGD, has developed this portal and app to make the skill development schemes accessible to the target groups of Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Safai Karamcharis. By the virtue of this initiative the youth of the target groups will now be able to avail the benefits of skill development training programmes more easily.
- The Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana is being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment from the year 2020-21.
- Under this Yojana, eligible target group are being provided skill development training programmes on
 - Up-skilling/Re-skilling
 - Short Term Training Programme
 - Long Term Training Programme and
 - Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP).

POSHAN Tracker Application

In news

POSHAN Abhiyaan aims to reduce malnutrition in the country in a phased manner, through a life cycle approach, by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach.

About the programme

- The Programme strives to induce behavioural change through nutrition centric *Jan Andolans* in the form of *Poshan Pakhwadas* and *Poshan Maahs*.
- The target for reducing the prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years is by 2% per annum and anemia among children under 5 years is by 3% per annum.

About the app

- Poshan Tracker management application provides a 360-degree view of the activities of the Anganwadi Centre (AWC), service deliveries of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and complete beneficiary management for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children.
- Simultaneously, the mobile application also digitizes and automates physical registers used by AWWs that helps improving their quality of work.
- The AWWs are being provided Smartphones procured through Government e-Market (GeM) for efficient service delivery.
- A total of 8.66 lakhs Smartphones have been procured by 32 States/UTs.
- Further, AWW and Lady Supervisor (LS) are being provided ₹200/- per month for recharging of smart phones.

Ujjwala 2.0

In news

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi launched Ujjwala 2.0 (Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana - PMUY) by handing over LPG connections, at Mahoba Uttar Pradesh via video conferencing.

Stats of previous phase

- In the first phase of the scheme, 8 crore poor, dalit, deprived, backward and tribal families were given free gas connections.
- The benefit of this free gas connection was felt in the era of the Corona pandemic.
- Ujjawala Yojana has led to manifold expansion of LPG gas infrastructure. During the last 6-7 years more than 11 thousand LPG distribution centres have been opened.
- In UP the number of these centres increased to 4 thousand from 2 thousand in 2014.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

- In May 2016, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MOPNG), introduced the 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' (PMUY) as a flagship scheme with an objective to make clean cooking fuel such as LPG available to the rural and deprived households which were otherwise using traditional cooking fuels such as firewood, coal, cow-dung cakes etc.
- Usage of traditional cooking fuels had detrimental impacts on the health of rural women as well as on the environment.
- The scheme was launched on 1st May 2016 in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri. Narendra Modi.

SCHEMES FOR BEGGARS

In news

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has formulated a scheme "SMILE - Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise", which includes sub scheme - 'Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging.

Objective:

It is to cover the welfare measures for both transgender persons and persons who are engaged in the act of begging.

Details

- The focus of the scheme is on rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counselling, basic documentation, education, skill development, economic linkages of the persons found to be engaged in begging.
- Ministry has released an amount of Rs. 1.50 crore to National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC) for conducting skill development programmes for the persons engaged in begging.
- So far, 514 persons engaged in Begging have been provided skill development training.
- It will be a comprehensive scheme for persons engaged in the act of begging.
- The scheme will cover identification, rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counselling, education, skill development with the support of State Governments, Local Urban Bodies and Voluntary Organizations.
- The scheme will be implemented in the selected cities having large concentrations of Beggar community during the financial year 2020-2021.
- The government is working in a mission mode with complete commitment to '**Har Ek Kaam, Desh Ke Naam**'.

Vehicle Scrappage Policy

In news

The launch of Vehicle Scrappage Policy is a significant milestone in India's development journey

Aim

To create a viable #circulareconomy & bring value for all stakeholders while being environmentally responsible.

Details

- The Investor Summit in Gujarat for setting up vehicle scrapping infrastructure opens a new range of possibilities.
- Vehicle scrapping will help phase out unfit & polluting vehicles in an environment friendly manner.
- Commercial vehicles over 15 years old and personal vehicles over 20 years old are marked for scrapping — it doesn't matter if they run on diesel or petrol — if they fail an automated fitness test.
- These will be deregistered; the owner can choose to scrap them, but cannot use them on the road.

Circular economy

- A circular economy depends on reuse, sharing, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing and recycling of resources to create a closed-loop system, minimising the use of resources, generation of waste, pollution and carbon emissions.
- When a car is scrapped, apart from metals including iron and steel, many other parts may emerge that can be refurbished and ploughed back into use.
- Recycled steel from scrap, even seats and plastic parts, have value in the scrap economy.
- It is similar to the economic activity of scrappage of old ships, like in Alang shipbreaking yard in Gujarat.

Re-Imagining Urban Rivers

In news

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and the National Institute for Urban Affairs (NIUA) had organised 'Re-Imagining Urban Rivers', a national level thesis competition in September 2020, under a joint project that the two organizations are implementing to promulgate river-sensitive development in our cities.

Details

- This is a first of its kind initiative to engage young minds to research and envisage solutions for urban river issues.
- The purpose of this sponsored thesis competition is to tap into the intellect and creativity of students to arrive at innovative solutions for re-imagining the outlook and management of rivers that flow through cities and their associated features.
- Second edition of the Sponsored Thesis Project Competition was launched at the event. This year's themes will be 'Reducing River pollution', 'Rejuvenating water bodies', 'Creating a vibrant river zone', 'Generating river-related economy' and 'Engaging citizens in river management activities.'

Theme

- The competition had three themes - Re-imagining water bodies and/or wetlands, developing eco-friendly riverfront projects and Promoting River tourism.
- Students from leading institutes across the country presented their thesis in the grand finale of the competition on 19th Aug 2021 at Indian Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

Namami Gange Programme

It is an Integrated Conservation Mission, approved as 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in June 2014 with budget outlay of Rs.20,000 Crore to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.

PM-KUSUM and Rooftop Solar Programme Phase-II

In news

Union Minister for Power and MNRE takes review of implementation of PM-KUSUM and Rooftop Solar Programme Phase-II

Details

- Minister emphasizes need for awareness on these schemes so that farmers and households can take benefits
- Joint efforts of Center and States will help in successful implementation of these Schemes and achieving the renewable energy targets of the country.
- PM-KUSUM Scheme, which would help in reducing the electricity subsidy, being given for the agriculture sector, to a large extent and assured that all possible support will be provided to the States/ UTs in implementation of this Scheme.

PM-KUSUM

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM KUSUM) Scheme for farmers for installation of solar pumps and grid connected solar and other renewable power plants in the country.
- The scheme aims to add solar and other renewable capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022 with total central financial support of Rs. 34,422 Crore including service charges to the implementing agencies

The Scheme consists of three components

- **Component A:** 10,000 MW of Decentralized Ground Mounted Grid Connected Renewable Power Plants of individual plant size up to 2 MW.
- **Component B:** Installation of 17.50 lakh standalone Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps of individual pump capacity up to 7.5 HP.
- **Component C:** Solarisation of 10 Lakh Grid-connected Agriculture Pumps of individual pump capacity up to 7.5 HP.

Islanding Schemes for Power Sector

In news

Secretary, Ministry of Power reviewed all the existing and planned Islanding Schemes in Indian Power System yesterday here with Central Electricity Authority (CEA), all five Regional Power Committees (RPCs), PGCIL and POSOCO.

Details

- Resilience of the electricity grid is very important particularly in restoration of supply in the event of the major power outage.
- Islanding Scheme is a defense mechanism for the power system in which a part of the system is islanded from a disturbed grid so that this subpart could survive in isolation from rest of grid and continuity of supply to the essential load in this area is maintained.

- Accordingly, CEA was advised to ensure the functional aspect of the existing Islanding schemes and also design Islanding schemes for major cities.
- In such electrical Islanded system, the essential loads should be identified and covered so that these load continue to be served even during any major outage.

Significance

These islanding schemes would ensure maintenance of essential services and also faster restoration of supply to the electricity consumers in the event of any outage.

Zero Hunger by 2030

In news

As part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj is organizing a National Webinar, 'Localization of Sustainable Development Goals and Role of Panchayats – Goal No. 2 – Zero Hunger

Details

- The day-long Webinar is expected to sensitize the leaders at the grassroots level on India's position in fighting hunger as also they get information on various schemes, programmes, initiatives, steps, innovative measures etc.
- Taken by Central and State Governments in the attainment of zero hunger which will help in building their capacity and enabling them to take actions at the local level for ensuring hunger-free Panchayat and thereby hunger-free India by 2030.
- The Webinar will have four technical sessions to discuss and deliberate critical issues/subjects like sufficiency of food production & food security, sustainable agricultural production, public distribution, minimization of food production and processing loss, nutritional security and leveraging of technological solutions having bearing on the attainment of Zero Hunger by 2030 besides the discussions on World vis-à-vis India's position on fighting hunger.
- The representative of World Food Programme, UNDP, representatives of the Central Ministries / Departments like Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Department of Food & Public Distribution and Ministry of Food Processing Industries and Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India will be the principal speakers as the States / UTs and Panchayati Raj Institutions / Rural Local Bodies will be participating in discussions.

Hallmarking scheme

In news

Hallmarking scheme is turning out to be grand success with more than 1 crore pieces of Jewellery hallmarked in a quick time.

Details

- As per this scheme, Registered is granted to the jewellers by BIS under Hallmarking Scheme.
- The BIS certified jewellers can get their jewellery hallmarked from any of the BIS recognized Assaying and Hallmarking Centres.
- The recognition of an Assaying and Hallmarking Centre is done against IS 15820:2009.
- The annual consumption of gold which was estimated at 65 tonnes in 1982, has increased to over 800 tonnes presently.
- About 80% is for jewellery fabrication (mainly 22 carat purity) for domestic demand, 15% for investor demand and barely 5% for industrial use.

- India is also home to around 4,50,000 gold smiths, over 100,000 gold jewellers, along with about 6000 diamonds- processing players and 8000 diamond jewellers.

Hallmarking

- Hallmarking is the accurate determination and official recording of the proportionate content of precious metal in precious metal articles.
- Hallmarks are thus official marks used in many countries as a guarantee of purity or fineness of precious metal articles.
- The principle objectives of the Hallmarking Scheme are to protect the public against adulteration and to obligate manufacturers to maintain legal standards of fineness.
- In India, at present two precious metals namely gold and silver have been brought under the purview of Hallmarking.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)

In news

1183 mobilisation camps organised across the country under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

Details

- State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs), State Skills Missions (SSM) came together with various Project Implementation Agencies (PIAs) to make the all-India event a grand success.
- The camps not only succeeded in generating interest in the DDU-GKY programme but also succeeded in enrolling close to 75660 candidates for upcoming trainings.
- The camps were organized both virtually and physically by the PIAs following all Covid safety protocols.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)

- It was launched on the 25th September, 2014, is a nationwide placement-linked skill training program funded by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India (GoI).
- DDUGKY seeks to build the placement-linked skills of the poor rural youth and place them in wage employment across various sectors of the economy.
- The programme has an outcome led design with guaranteed placements for at least 70% trained candidates.
- The DDU-GKY programme is being implemented in 27 states and 3 UTs for rural poor youth with an emphasis on placements.

New portal under Bhuvan “Yuktdhara”

In news

New portal under Bhuvan “Yuktdhara” will facilitate planning of new MGNREGA assets using Remote Sensing and GIS based information.

Details

- This platform will serve as a repository of assets (Geotags) created under various national rural development programmes, i.e., MGNREGA, Integrated Watershed Management Programme,
- Per Drop More Crop and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana etc., along with field photographs”.
- The name given is very apt as word ‘Yukt’ is derived from Yojanam, the planning and ‘Dhara’ indicates the flow.

- It is definitely a culmination of untiring joint efforts of ISRO and Ministry of Rural development made towards realising a G2G service for rural planning in support of decentralized decision making.

About the portal

- Due to its rich information base, satellite images and analytical capabilities, Bhuvan, in fact, has become a de-facto geospatial platform for number of developmental planning activities in the country.
- This portal integrates wide variety of thematic layers, multi-temporal high resolution earth observation data with analysis tools.
- Planners will analyse previous assets under various schemes and facilitates identification of new works using online tools.
- Plans prepared will be evaluated by appropriate authorities under State Departments.
- Thus, Yuktdhara based plans will be prepared by **grassroot functionary** and verified by appropriate authorities for relevance and resource allocation.
- This would ensure quality of plan and enable a long term monitoring of the assets created over the years.
- A Citizen-centric Mobile Application JANMANREGA has helped rural population for providing feedback using Bhuvan services.

e-Shram portal

In news

Targeted delivery and last mile delivery, has been a major focus of the schemes of government of India and the National Database of Unorganised workers (E-Shram portal) is another key step towards that”, and will be a game changer for the social security of Millions of Unorganised Workers.

Aim

The government aims to register 38 crore unorganised workers, such as construction labourers, migrant workforce, street vendors and domestic workers, among others.

Details

- The workers will be issued an e-Shram card containing a 12 digit unique number, which, going ahead, will help in including them in social security schemes.
- The registration of workers on the portal will be coordinated by the Labour Ministry, state governments, trade unions and CSCs, officials said.
- Awareness campaigns would be planned across the country to enable nationwide registration of workers.

Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana

In news

Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) - National Mission for Financial Inclusion, completes seven years of successful implementation.

Details

- The journey of PMJDY led interventions undertaken over a short span of 7 years has in effect, produced both transformational as well as directional change thereby making the emerging FI ecosystem capable of delivering financial services to the last person of the society-the poorest of the poor.
- Financial Inclusion is among top-most priorities of the Government as it is an enabler for inclusive growth.
- 55% Jan-Dhan account holders are women and 67% Jan Dhan accounts are in rural and semi-urban areas.

- Under PM Garib Kalyan Yojana, a total of Rs. 30,945 crore have been credited in accounts of women PMJDY account holders during Covid lockdown.

Background

Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is National Mission for Financial Inclusion to ensure access to financial services, namely, Banking/ Savings & Deposit Accounts, Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension in an affordable manner.

Objectives

- Ensure access of financial products & services at an affordable cost.
- Use of technology to lower cost & widen reach.

Basic tenets of the scheme

- **Banking the unbanked** - Opening of basic savings bank deposit (BSBD) account with minimal paperwork, relaxed KYC, e-KYC, account opening in camp mode, zero balance & zero charges.
- **Securing the unsecured** - Issuance of Indigenous Debit cards for cash withdrawals & payments at merchant locations, with free accident insurance coverage of Rs. 2 lakh.
- **Funding the unfunded** - Other financial products like micro-insurance, overdraft for consumption, micro-pension & micro-credit.

The scheme was launched based upon the following 6 pillars

- Universal access to banking services – Branch and BC
- Basic savings bank accounts with overdraft facility of Rs. 10,000/- to every eligible adult
- Financial Literacy Program– Promoting savings, use of ATMs, getting ready for credit, availing insurance and pensions, using basic mobile phones for banking
- Creation of Credit Guarantee Fund – To provide banks some guarantee against defaults
- Insurance – Accident cover up to Rs. 1,00,000 and life cover of Rs. 30,000 on account opened between 15 Aug 2014 to 31 January 2015
- Pension scheme for Unorganized sector

Laddu Distribution Scheme

In news

Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah launched nutritious a 'Laddu Distribution Scheme' for pregnant women in his Parliamentary constituency Gandhinagar.

Details

- Women need nutritious diet most when pregnant and a laddu contains protein, ghee, vitamins and it can be eaten throughout in a month.
- In this, about seven thousand pregnant women will get 15 nutritious laddus free of cost every month till the birth of the child through voluntary organizations to fight malnutrition.
- The Prime Minister launched Poshan Abhiyan on 8th March, 2018 from Jhunjhnu in Rajasthan to spread awareness about issues related to malnutrition.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, started in 2016, around three crore women undergo pre-natal tests.
- Shri Amit Shah requested heads of Gram Panchayats that no eligible person is deprived of any benefit of any government scheme and it is the responsibility of all elected representatives to ensure this. He said infrastructure development will continue, however empowerment of the weak, poor, backward, women and

providing children their rights is most important in a democracy, and if we are able to do these then only can we fulfil our responsibility as elected representatives.

“Har Ghar Nal Se Jal” Mission

In news

Mapping groundwater sources by CSIR will help utilise groundwater for drinking purposes and supplement Prime Minister Modi’s “Har Ghar Nal Se Jal” Mission.

Details

- CSIR-NGRI have undertaken High Resolution Aquifer Mapping & Management in Arid Regions of North Western India to augment the groundwater resources.
- Heli-borne geophysical mapping technique of CSIR-NGRI provides high resolution 3D image of the sub-surface up to a depth of 500 meters below the ground.
- In just two years of the Jal Jeevan Mission, more than four and a half crore families have started getting water from taps.
- Arid areas in the north western India cover nearly 12% of the total geographical area of the country and is home to more than 8 crore people.

Har Ghar Nal Se Jal

Vision

Every rural household has drinking water supply in adequate quantity of prescribed quality on regular and long-term basis at affordable service delivery charges leading to improvement in living standards of rural communities.

Mission

Jal Jeevan Mission is to assist, empower and facilitate:

- States/ UTs in planning of participatory rural water supply strategy for ensuring potable drinking water security on long-term basis to every rural household and public institution, viz. GP building, School, Anganwadi centre, Health centre, wellness centres, etc.
- States/ UTs for creation of water supply infrastructure so that every rural household has Functional Tap Connection (FHTC) by 2024 and water in adequate quantity of prescribed quality is made available on regular basis.
- States/ UTs to plan for their drinking water security
- GPs/ rural communities to plan, implement, manage, own, operate and maintain their own in-village water supply systems
- States/ UTs to develop robust institutions having focus on service delivery and financial sustainability of the sector by promoting utility approach
- Capacity building of the stakeholders and create awareness in community on significance of water for improvement in quality of life
- In making provision and mobilization of financial assistance to States/ UTs for implementation of the mission.

Objectives

- To provide FHTC to every rural household.
- To prioritize provision of FHTCs in quality affected areas, villages in drought prone and desert areas, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) villages, etc.
- To provide functional tap connection to Schools, Anganwadi centres, GP buildings, Health centres, wellness centres and community buildings

- To monitor functionality of tap connections.
- To promote and ensure voluntary ownership among local community by way of contribution in cash, kind and/ or labour and voluntary labour (shramdaan).
- To assist in ensuring sustainability of water supply system, i.e water source, water supply infrastructure, and funds for regular O&M.
- To empower and develop human resource in the sector such that the demands of construction, plumbing, electrical, water quality management, water treatment, catchment protection, O&M, etc. are taken care of in short and long term.
- To bring awareness on various aspects and significance of safe drinking water and involvement of stakeholders in manner that make water everyone's business.

SonChiraiya' - for Urban SHG products

In news

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, ShriDurga Shanker Mishra, launched '**SonChiraiya'** – (A brand and logo)- for marketing of urban Self-Help Group (SHG) products.

Details

- Helping women to become financially empowered and live a dignified life is one of the priority areas of the Government.
- DAY-NULM, under the aegis of MoHUA, has focussed on equipping the urban poor women with adequate skills and opportunities, and to enable them to promote sustainable micro enterprises.
- It mobilises women from urban poor households into SHGs and their federations to create a support system for these women.
- Over 5.7 lakh SHGs have been formed across various States/ UTs with almost 60 lakh members.
- Many of these SHGs are engaged in livelihood activities, producing goods such as handicrafts, textiles, toys, eatables and so on.
- These were being sold primarily in local neighbourhood markets and often faced barriers in achieving visibility and wide market access.
- To overcome these challenges, Ministry entered into Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with leading e-Commerce Portals viz. Amazon and Flipkart, with an underlying narrative of women empowerment.

Significance

- This initiative will certainly prove as a step towards increased visibility and global access for the products made by urban SHG women.
- Ministry expects to link many more such SHG members, with variety of professionally packaged, hand-crafted ethnic products, reaching the doorsteps of the customers globally.

Training for Augmenting Productivity and Services

In news

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar launches TAPAS

TAPAS

- As a standard MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) platform, TAPAS (Training for Augmenting Productivity and Services) offers various courses in the field of social defence for the capacity building of stakeholders.
- Five courses on Drug (Substance) Abuse Prevention, Geriatric/Elderly Care, Care and Management of Dementia, Transgender Issues and Social Defence Issues are available free of cost.

- TAPAS provides filmed lectures and e-study material.
- The main objective of introducing the course modules is to impart training and enhance the knowledge and skills for the capacity building of the participants. .
- It can be taken up by anyone who wishes to enhance his or her knowledge on the topics and there is no fee for joining.
- The five basic courses are on Drug (Substance) Abuse Prevention, Geriatric/Elderly Care, Care and Management of Dementia, Transgender Issues and on comprehensive course on Social Defence Issues.
- In our education system, where the offline mode of teaching is so deeply entrenched, this course will lead the path of change and open up new possibilities.
- There is no dearth of respect and regard for our age-old guru-shishyaparampara, but there's no reason why it can't be transited to the online medium.

Vocational Training Program for Women at JNPT

In news

As part of its corporate social responsibility, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), one of the premier container handling Ports of India, commenced a vocational training program for women in collaboration with Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS).

Details

- JNPT, under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Fund, had approved a grant of Rs 50 Lakh to conduct Skill Development Trainings for 1000 Beneficiaries in the Raigad district. The three-month-long vocational training program will focus on skill development and equipping women with occupational skills that will further facilitate them in entering the mainstream.
- The courses chosen encompass skills like Beauty Culture and Health Care, Helpers for Nursing Homes, Sanitary Pad making, Vegetable and Fish Drying, Warli Painting, Aggarbatti Packing, etc.
- In the first phase, JSS trained 450 beneficiaries in 18 courses across Raigad District with the assistance of JNPT.
- In the present stage of the initiative, around 400 beneficiaries would be trained in 16 different courses across Raigad District, with five batches planned for the Uran Taluka.
- Jan Shikshan Sansthan is a Voluntary Organization affiliated with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and has been working in skill development and livelihood generation for more than 15 years.
- JSS has imparted more than 40 types of vocational courses and has trained more than 28000 candidates.

100 days 'SUJALAM' Campaign

In news

The Ministry of Jal Shakti began '**SUJALAM**', a '**100 days campaign**' as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations to create more and more ODF Plus villages by undertaking waste water management at village level particularly through creation of 1 million Soak-pits and also other Grey water management activities.

Details

- The effort of campaign would be directed towards achieving the ODF plus status for villages across the country in an accelerated manner in a short time.
- The campaign will not only build desired infrastructure i.e. soak pit for management of greywater in villages but will also aid in sustainable management of waterbodies.

- The disposal of waste water and clogging of water bodies in the villages or on the outskirts of the villages remain one of the major problems.
- Furthermore, the campaign would boost the momentum of SBMG phase II activities through community participation and it will increase awareness about ODF-plus activities.

The Mahayogi Gorakhnath Vishwavidyalaya

In news

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the Mahayogi Gorakhnath Vishwavidyalaya at Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

Details

- This University would conduct employment generating courses keeping in view the need of the hour in addition to courses in Yoga, Ayurveda, medical education, higher education and technical education etc.
- While this university would encourage high-level research, it would also run vocational education and skill development courses for students.
- One of the objectives of the National Education Policy is to improve the curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions and also to create awareness among the students about their fundamental duties and constitutional values as well as their roles and responsibilities as citizens in the changing world.
- The President noted that Maharana Pratap Education Council, established in 1932 with the goal of social upliftment through the spread of education, is running about 50 educational institutions in northern India, especially in eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- The Gorakshpeeth has been playing major role in the socio-religious awakening of India for centuries.
- During India's freedom movement, this Peeth had played an important role in the political awakening.

Defence & Security

MAIDEN SEA VOYAGE

In news

Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) 'Vikrant' successfully accomplished its maiden sea voyage for which she had sailed on 04 Aug 21 from Kochi.

Highlights

- Trials progressed as planned and system parameters proved satisfactory. The carrier would continue to undergo series of sea trials to prove all equipment and systems prior handing over the vessel to the Indian Navy.
- Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) 'Vikrant' designed by Indian Navy's Directorate of Naval Design(DND) is being built at Cochin Shipyard Limited(CSL), a Public Sector Shipyard under Ministry of Shipping(MoS).
- IAC is a leading example of the nation's quest for "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" and Indian Navy's "Make in India" initiative, with more than 76% indigenous content.

Specification

- The Indigenous Aircraft Carrier is 262 m long, 62 m at the widest part and height of 59 m including the superstructure.

- There are 14 decks in all, including five in the superstructure.
- The ship has over 2,300 compartments, designed for a crew of around 1700 people, having gender-sensitive accommodation spaces for women officers.
- The ship with high degree of automation for machinery operation, ship navigation and survivability, has been designed to accommodate an assortment of fixed wing and rotary aircraft.

Exercise Konkan 2021

In news

The KONKAN series of exercises commenced in 2004, and since then has grown in scale.

Aim

The aim of the exercise this year would be on anti-air warfare, anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, visit board search and seizure (VBSS) and seamanship evolutions.

Details

- INS Tabar entered Portsmouth harbour on 13 Aug 21 as part of her good will visit.
- Earlier, the ship commenced Exercise Konkan 2021 on 12 Aug 21 with a maritime interception exercise with HMS Westminster off Portsmouth.
- Exercise Konkan 2021 will be continued between Tabar and Westminster on 16 Aug 21 after the departure of Tabar from Portsmouth.
- On entering harbour, the Final Planning Conference for Exercise Konkan 2021 was held in non-contact form between the Ops Teams of Tabar and Westminster.
- As part of the harbour engagements of Exercise Konkan 2021, a number of professional interactions were held between the two sides on 13 Aug 21.
- These included Subject Matter Expert (SME) exchanges on electric propulsion, unmanned surface vessels and electronic navigation.
- The KONKAN series of exercises commenced in 2004, and since then has grown in scale.

BILATERAL MARITIME EXERCISE WITH VIETNAM PEOPLE'S NAVY

In news

In continuation with ongoing deployment of Indian Navy ships in the South China Sea, INS Ranvijay and INS Kora undertook bilateral maritime exercise with Vietnam People's Navy (VPN) frigate VPNS Ly Thai To(HQ-012) on 18 Aug 21

Aim

The bilateral interaction aims to consolidate the strong bond shared by the two navies and would be another step towards strengthening India-Vietnam defence relations.

Details

- The Indian Naval ships arrived at Cam Ranh, Vietnam on 15 August 21 for harbour phase which included professional interactions with VPN maintaining extant Covid-19 protocols.
- The sea phase included surface warfare exercises, weapon firing drills and helicopter operations.
- Regular interactions between the two navies over the years have enhanced their interoperability and adaptability.

Significance

- This has ensured a quantum jump in the complexity and scale of professional exchanges.
- This visit also holds special importance as Indian Naval ships celebrated the country's 75th Independence Day in Vietnam.

INS Ranvijay

- INS Ranvijay is a guided-missile destroyer and the latest of the Rajput class.
- The ship was commissioned on 21 Dec 1987 and is equipped with an array of weapons and sensors which includes Surface to Surface Missile, Anti Air Missiles and guns, Heavy Weight Torpedoes, Anti Submarine Rockets and capable of carrying Anti Submarine Heli-copter (Kamov 28).
- INS Ranvijay is in company with INS Kora which is the lead ship of Kora class missile corvette.
- The ship is fitted with Surface-to-Surface missiles and Anti Air Guns.

35TH EDITION OF HYDERABAD SAILING WEEK

In news

5th edition of Hyderabad Sailing Week Yachting Association of India (YAI) Sailing Championship organised at Hussain Sagar Lake, Hyderabad from 13 Aug to 19 Aug 21.

Details

- This national ranking event witnessed 120 sailors from all over India participating in Laser Standard, 4.7 and Radial class of boats.
- Nine members from Navy Sailing Team based at INWTC Mumbai, five members from INWTC Visakhapatnam and six boys of Navy Boys Sports Company from INS Mandovi participated in Laser 4.7 class of boat and gave tough competition.
- This National event in the Laser Class of boats - which is an Olympic class, for both men and women, is being conducted regularly since 1986.
- The closing ceremony held in the presence of YAI President Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh. He inspired and motivated the boys and wished them good luck for future sailing championships.
- The EME Sailing Association was formed in 1964 and it has produced a number of outstanding sailors and officials both at the National and International levels.

The Yachting Association of India

- The Yachting Association of India was formally constituted on 15 May 1960 and was registered under the Societies Registration Act XXVI of 1961 on the 22 December 1964 at Calcutta, West Bengal.
- The YAI is affiliated to the International Sailing Federation (ISAF), which is recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as the governing authority for sailing world wide.
- The YAI is also officially recognised by the Indian Olympic Association and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India as the governing authority for sailing, windsurfing, motor boating, powerboat racing and personal watercraft, at sea and on inland waters in India.

EXERCISE KONKAN 2021

In news

Exercise Konkan 2021 was held between INS Tabar and HMS Westminster on 16 Aug 21 in the English Channel.

Details

- The exercise included the participation of integral helicopters of the two ships and the Falcon Electronic Warfare aircraft.
- A wide range of exercises including co-ordinated anti-submarine procedures, firing drills, combined maritime picture compilation, combat formation maneuvering and replenishment at sea were conducted.
- These along with the diverse professional engagements held earlier in harbour, have enabled Exercise Konkani 2021 consolidate interoperability and helped cement the strong bonds of friendship between the two navies.

Background

- The Bilateral KONKANI exercise provides a platform for the two Navies to periodically exercise at sea and in harbour, so as to build interoperability and share best practices.
- The KONKANI series of exercises commenced in 2004, and since then has grown in scale.

'Dilli Series' Sea Power Webinar - 2021

In news

Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala will conduct the eighth edition of the prestigious annual 'Dilli Series' Sea Power Seminar on 11th and 12th of October 2021.

Theme

- The theme for this year's Webinar is 'Maritime History of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)'. Admiral Arun Prakash, PVSM, AVSM, VrC, VSM (Retd), former Chief of the Naval Staff has consented to be the Chief Guest for the occasion.
- This year's Webinar is aimed to provide exposure to cadets on the maritime history of the Indian Ocean Region, under three sub themes viz, **Early Maritime Interactions and Relevance Today, India's Maritime Journey – From 15th to 19th Century and Takeaways in 21st Century, and Lessons Learnt from India's Maritime Journey – British Raj to Independence and Beyond.**
- The Webinar also features a Panel Discussion on 'Indian Navy Through the Decades (75 Years)' steered by some of the finest maritime history experts in the country.

This year, the event will be hosted in the Webinar format and will be streamed live on popular social media platforms.

Malabar war

In news

The Quad countries — India, the U.S., Australia and Japan — will carry out the next edition of the Malabar naval exercise from August 26 to 29 off the coast of Guam amid mounting global concerns over China's growing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region.

Details

- Indian stealth frigate INS Shivalik and anti-submarine warfare corvette INS Kadmat arrived in Guam, an island territory of the U.S. in the Western Pacific, on Saturday to take part in the exercise that would feature complex drills.
- The Malabar-21 will witness high-tempo exercises among destroyers, frigates, corvettes, submarines, helicopters and long-range maritime patrol aircraft of the participating navies.
- The exercise is taking place in the midst of growing convergence of interests in the maritime domain as well as military cooperation among the Quad nations in the face of China's increasing assertiveness.

- Though the exercise is not part of the framework of cooperation under Quad, it is seen as a reflection of the increasing partnership among the four countries.

Colonel Rank to Women Officers

In news

A Selection Board of the Indian Army cleared the way for the promotion of five women officers to Colonel (Time Scale) rank, post completion of 26 years of reckonable service.

Details

- This is the first time that women officers serving with the Corps of Signals, Corps of Electronic and Mechanical Engineers (EME) and the Corps of Engineers have been approved to the rank of Colonel.
- Previously, promotion to the rank of Colonel was only applicable for women officers in the Army Medical Corps (AMC), Judge Advocate General (JAG) and the Army Education Corps (AEC).
- The widening of promotion avenues to more branches of the Indian Army is a sign of increasing career opportunities for women officers.
- Combined with the decision to grant permanent commission to women officers from a majority of branches of the Indian Army, this step defines the Indian Army's approach towards a gender-neutral Army.
- The five women officers selected for Colonel Time Scale rank are Lt Col Sangeeta Sardana from the Corps of Signals, Lt Col Sonia Anand and Lt Col Navneet Duggal from the Corps of EME and Lt Col Reenu Khanna and Lt Col Ritcha Sagar from the Corps of Engineers.

EXERCISE BETWEEN INDIAN NAVY AND THE PHILIPPINE NAVY

In news

The joint evolutions conducted during the exercise included several operational manoeuvres and the participating ships of both navies were satisfied with the consolidation of interoperability achieved through this operational interaction at sea.

Highlights

- The Indian naval ships are currently deployed to the Western Pacific with an aim to strengthen maritime security collaboration with partner nations.
- The interaction with BRP Antonio Luna was, therefore, an enriching opportunity for the Indian Navy to consolidate its bilateral relations with the Philippine Navy.
- In compliance with the prevailing pandemic guidelines, the exercise was conducted in contactless manner and all necessary health and safety protocols were strictly observed.
- After the exercise, the Indian naval ships are scheduled to call at Manila Port for replenishment.
- India and The Philippines share a very robust defence and security partnership built over several years and spanning across all domains.
- Both navies remain committed to further strengthening bilateral collaboration in the maritime domain towards a collective aim of ensuring a stable, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

First batch of Multi-Mode Hand Grenades handed over to Indian Army

In news

The first batch of Multi-Mode Hand Grenades (MMHG), manufactured by Economic Explosives Limited (EEL) following Transfer of Technology from Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory of Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO), was handed over to the Indian Army.

Details

- The handing over of MMHG as a shining example of the increasing collaboration between the public & private sectors and a big step towards self-reliance in defence manufacturing.
- It is an important milestone not only in the field of defence manufacturing, but also in achieving 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat' as envisioned by our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- The problems being faced by the Armed Forces, Defence Public Sector Undertakings and OFB are identified and brought before entrepreneurs, MSMEs, start-ups and innovators through Defence India Startup Challenge (DISC) to find solutions.

About the grenade

- The grenade is not just more lethal, but is safer to use. It has a distinctive design that gives flexibility of employment in both defensive (fragmentation) and offensive (stun) modes.
- It has a highly accurate delay time, very high reliability in usage and safe for carriage.

Measures undertaken by the Government to transform the defence sector

- These include setting up of Defence Industrial Corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu
- Formulation of draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) 2020
- Earmarking around 64 per cent of its modernisation funds under capital acquisition budget for 2021-22 for procurement from domestic companies
- Notifying two Positive Indigenisation Lists of over 200 defence items to promote self-reliance & defence exports
- Corporatisation of Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)
- Increasing FDI limit from 49 to 74 per cent under automatic route and beyond 74 per cent through government route and according top priority to 'Buy {Indian-IDDMM (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)}' category for capital procurement.

Mission Sagar

In news

Indian Navy's Landing Ship Tank (Large) INS Airavat arrived at Tanjung Priok Port in Jakarta, Indonesia on 24 August 2021 to deliver 10 Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) containers, based on the requirement projected by the Government of Indonesia.

Details

- On completion of disembarkation of the medical supplies and, as part of the ongoing Mission SAGAR, INS Airavat will continue onwards to deliver medical supplies to other friendly nations in the region.
- INS Airavat, with a primary role to carry out amphibious operations is also configured to perform HADR missions and has been a part of various relief efforts across the Indian Ocean in the past.
- Earlier the same ship had trans-shipped medical aid and had handed over 05 Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) containers (100 MT) and 300 Oxygen Concentrators to Indonesia on 24 July 2021.
- India and Indonesia enjoy a strong cultural bond and partnership, and have been working together in the maritime domain towards a safer Indo-Pacific.
- The two navies also regularly carry out joint naval exercises in the form of bilateral exercises and coordinated patrols.

Indo-kazakhstan joint training exercise

In news

As part of military diplomacy and to strengthen the growing strategic relation with Kazakhstan, the 5th edition of Indo- Kazakhstan Joint Training Exercise, "KAZIND-21" will be conducted at Training Node, Aisha Bibi, Kazakhstan, from 30 August to 11 September 2021.

Details

- The exercise is a joint training between both the Armies, which will boost the bilateral relations between India and Kazakhstan.
- The Indian Army contingent represented by a battalion of The Bihar Regiment consists of a total of 90 personnel led by a Contingent Commander.
- The Kazakhstan Army will be represented by a company group.

Scope

The scope of Joint Exercise includes professional exchange, planning & execution of operation in Counter terrorism environment at sub unit level and sharing expertise on skills at arms, combat shooting and experiences in Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorism operations.

Significance

- The Exercise will provide an opportunity to the Armed Forces of India & Kazakhstan to train for Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorism operation in mountainous, rural scenario under UN mandate.
- The exercise will culminate after a 48 hours long validation exercise which will involve a scenario of neutralization of terrorists in a semi-rural hideout.
- The exercise will strengthen mutual confidence, inter-operability and enable sharing of best practices between the Armed Forces of India and Kazakhstan.

COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE AT

In news

The two day conference reviewed the progress of operational goals set for the Command and highlighted discussions on ways and means to optimise full spectrum combat readiness.

Details

- While addressing the Commanders, CAS highlighted the increasing importance of Eastern Air Command in the overall strategic perspective.
- CAS urged the Commanders to enthuse the younger air warriors to put their training and skills to full use in their assignments to upgraded and new generation systems and weapon platforms.
- He appreciated the contribution of all personnel of EAC in their consistent efforts to improve their operational output backed by a strong maintenance and administrative support system.
- CAS awarded trophies to Stations for achieving excellence in the fields of Operations, Maintenance and Administration.
- Air Force Station Tezpur was awarded the trophy of '**Best Flying Station – Pride of EAC**' and Air Force Station Salua was declared the '**Best Non-Flying Station**'.

Indigenously built Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Vigraha'

In news

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh dedicates to the Nation Indigenously built Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Vigraha'

Details

- He describes it as a perfect example of successful public-private partnership to achieve 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat'
- The ship is a perfect example of a successful partnership between public and private sectors to realise the dream of self-reliant India & also a reflection of the significant improvement in India's coastal defense capability.
- For the first time in the history of Indian defence, contracts for not one or two, but seven vessels have been signed with a private sector company.
- Due to these reforms India will soon become a defence manufacturing hub which will cater to not just the domestic needs but to the whole world.
- Indian Ocean region is a key route not just for India but for the entire world as it is home to more than two-thirds of the oil shipments, one-third of bulk cargo and over half of container traffic.
- ICGS Vighraha will be based at Visakhapatnam and operate on India's Eastern Seaboard under the Operational and Administrative Control of the Commander, Coast Guard Region (East).
- ICGS Vighraha is commanded by Commandant PN Anoop has complement of 11 Officers and 110 men.

Miscellaneous

North Eastern Region District SDG Index

In news

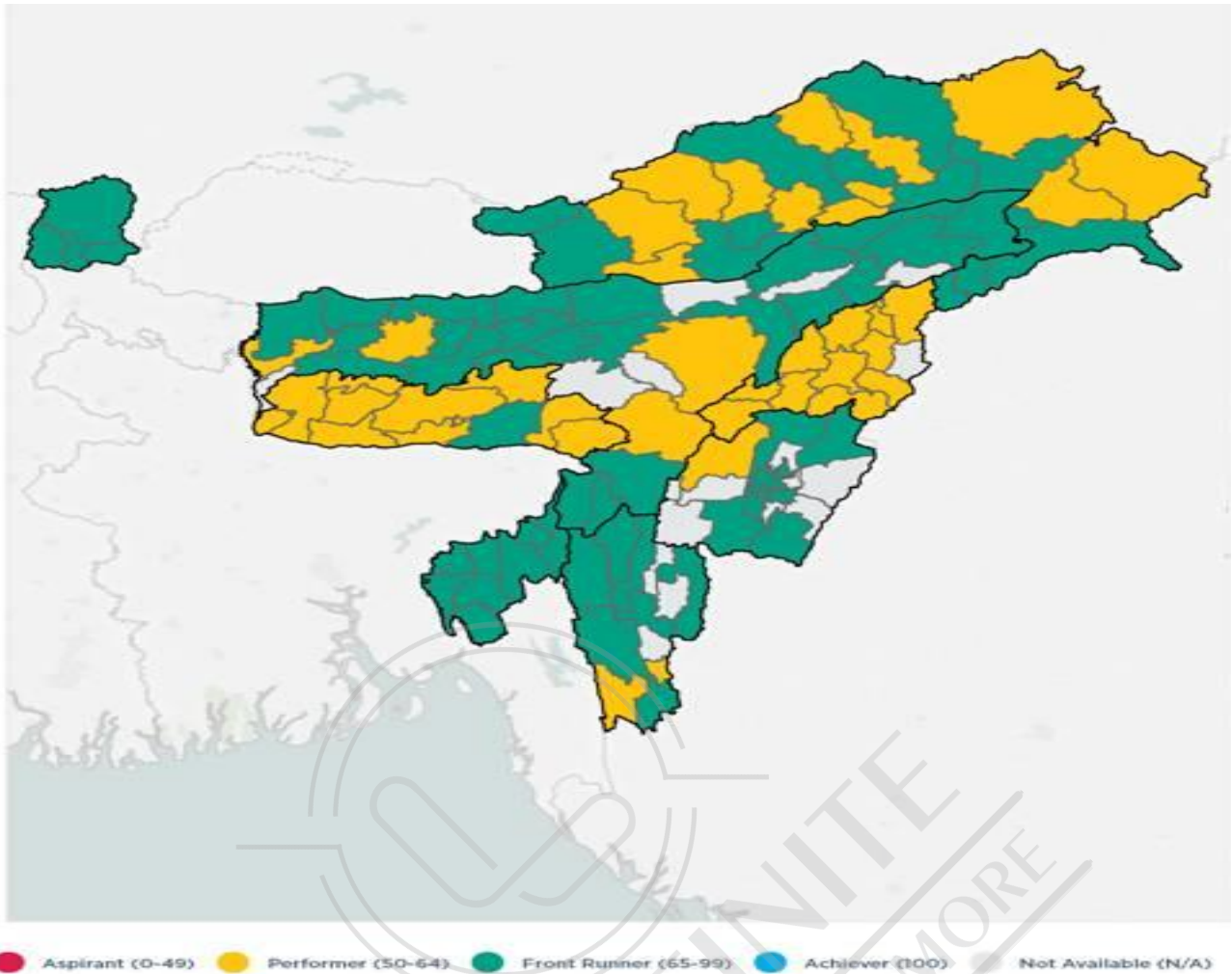
NITI Aayog Releases North Eastern Region District SDG Index and Dashboard 2021–22.

Details

- It is the first of its kind in the country as it focuses on the North Eastern Region, which is of critical significance to the country's development trajectory.
- The Index measures the performance of the districts of the eight States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura on the Sustainable Development Goals and their corresponding targets and ranks the districts based on the same.
- The index is based on NITI Aayog's SDG India Index –the principal and official tool for monitoring progress on the SDGs at the national and State/ Union Territory levels and shares the common ethos of bench marking performance and ranking on the SDGs to foster competition among the districts.
- The index offers insights into the social, economic, and environmental status of the region and its districts in their march towards achieving the SDGs.
- It is a unique policy tool which has immense potential to measure district level progress, highlight critical gaps, facilitate resource allocation, and will be a handy tool for policy makers in the eight North Eastern States, Ministry of DoNER and other Union Ministries.

Overall Results and Findings

Out of the 103 districts considered for ranking, 64 districts belonged to the Front Runner category while 39 districts were in the Performer category in the composite score and ranking of districts. All districts in Sikkim and Tripura fall in the Front Runner category and there are no districts in the Aspirant or Achiever categories.



East Sikkim [Score 75.87] ranks first in the region followed by districts Gomati and North Tripura [Score 75.73] in the second position. The score for the 103 districts ranges from 53.00 in Kiphire [NL] to 75.87 in East Sikkim [SK].

NewsOnAir Radio Live-Stream Global Rankings

In news

In an interesting new addition to NewsOnAir Ranking measurements, ranking of most popular AIR News 24*7 shows globally has also been featured.

Details

- Morning News, Samachar Prabhat, Satya Ke Prayog and Aaj Savere are some of the most popular Radio shows on AIR News 24*7 globally.
- In the latest rankings of top countries in the world (excluding India) where All India Radio Live-streams on NewsOnAir App are most popular, New Zealand has made a comeback in the top 10, after displacing Saudi Arabia from the 10th position and also top 10.
- In ranking of countries (excluding India) for the Top AIR streams, New Zealand has soft spot for Vividh Bharati National, FM Gold Delhi, FM Rainbow Delhi, AIR Kochi and Vividh Bharati Bengaluru.
- Apart from being popular in Middle-east countries, AIR Thrissur has quite a fan following in Singapore, Hong Kong and United States.
- More than 240 Radio Services of All India Radio are live-streamed on NewsOnAir App, Prasar Bharati's official App.

- These All India Radio Streams on NewsOnAir App have a large number of listeners not just in India, but globally, in more than 85 countries and 8000 cities across the globe.

Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS-4)

In news

Union Health Minister Shri Mansukh Mandaviya presides over the release of Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS-4), India, 2019 National Fact Sheet.

Stats

- Nearly one-fifth of the students aged 13-15 used any form of the tobacco product (smoking, smokeless, and any other form) in their life. However, the current use (during last 30 days) was 8.5%. Between the last two surveys, the current use declined by 42% (2009-2019).
- Prevalence of tobacco use among boys was 9.6% and among girls was 7.4%.
- The prevalence of smoking tobacco was 7.3%. In case of smokeless tobacco product, the prevalence was 4.1%.
- Ever use of e-cigarette among the students was 2.8%.
- Use of any form of tobacco was higher among boys than girls.
- The current use of tobacco among students across the States/ UTs ranged from the highest in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram (58% each) to the lowest in Himachal Pradesh (1.1%) and Karnataka (1.2%).

Doodh Duronto

In news

Transportation of Milk through “Doodh Duronto” special trains from Renigunta of Andhra Pradesh to the National Capital has crossed **ten crore litres mark**.

Details

- Right from the date of introduction on 26th March, 2020, these special trains were operated by South Central Railway on uninterrupted basis and till date, 2502 Milk tankers were transported through 443 trips.
- Transportation of Milk by rail from Renigunta to New Delhi has been very important and crucial to meet the essential needs of the Nation. Prior to Covid-19, Milk tankers were being attached to weekly Superfast Trains to cater the milk needs of the people in New Delhi and surrounding regions.
- Doodh Duronto specials are run normally with 06 Milk tankers, each milk tanker having a capacity of 40,000 liters i.e., totaling to 2.40 lakh liters of milk in a train.
- So far, 2,502 milk tankers have been operated in 443 trips of these special trains transporting more than 10 crore liters of milk.
- The Officials of Guntakal Division are in constant touch with the freight customers who are offering the loading of milk and have been attending to their requirements so that there is no hindrance in operation of the trains.
- Since introduction of this novel initiative, these trains have been operated continuously during peak Covid times and is also being continued further to balance the supply chain of the essential commodities.

Bailey Trail & Gorichen Trek

In news

Ministry of Tourism organises webinar on “Bailey Trail & Gorichen Trek in Arunachal Pradesh” under Dekho Apna Desh series

About the trek

- Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat
- The Bailey Trail in the Himalayan State of Arunachal Pradesh traces the historic route taken by Lt. Col. F.M. Bailey, British Political officer who explored this area while trekking from Tawang to Bomdila via Jan, Mago, Lurtem, Potok, Changla, Thungri and Chander.
- The Bailey Trail covers a wide variety of terrain, from lowland pastures and serene villages to powerful glaciers and stunning mountain views.
- Along the way, one will come across hot water spring at Mago, thundering waterfalls at Jang and cross icy rivers and high mountain passes touching almost 16000ft. above sea level.
- Another beautiful trek was discussed during the webinar was Seven Lakes Trek of Anini, Dibang Valley.
- Dibang Valley is the largest district of Arunachal Pradesh with the lowest density of population in India.
- One can experience lush-green mountains, heavy rainfall, rivers, sparkling waterfalls etc.

National Maritime Heritage Complex

In news

National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) is conceptualized as an international tourist destination, dedicated to the legacy of maritime heritage of India, at Lothal, Gujarat with various tourist facilities/amenities such as National Maritime Heritage Museum, Heritage Theme Park, Maritime Research Institute, landscaping and recreational venues, to attract tourists besides pavilion for each coastal states and union territories to showcase the maritime heritage of India.

There has been plans for providing digital tourism.

- Augmented/virtual reality to offer immersive experience of maritime heritage.
- Sound and light shows
- Touch screen kiosks
- Short films on important events related to the Maritime history.

Operation Blue Freedom – Land World Record at Siachen Glacier

In news

Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment to Flag-Off 'Operation Blue Freedom – Land World Record at Siachen Glacier'

Details

- People with disabilities from across the country will undertake an expedition till Siachen Glacier to create a new World Record for the largest team of people with disabilities to reach the world's highest battlefield.
- Recently, The Government of India has permitted a team of people with disabilities to scale Siachen Glacier.
- The team of people with disabilities trained by 'Team CLAW' a team of Armed Forces veterans.
- The selected people with disabilities from across the country will undertake an expedition till Kumar Post (Siachen Glacier) to create a new World Record for the largest team of people with disabilities to reach the world's highest battlefield.

Significance

- The successful execution of this pioneering expedition, 'Operation Blue Freedom', shall firmly place India on the global stage as a leader in empowering Divyangjanand set a benchmark for other nations to emulate.

- This will drive The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's vision for Divyangjan and MSJE's pursuit to harness the immense productive potential of people with disabilities.
- Simultaneously, it will powerfully portray the skill and heart of India's Armed Forces not only on the Battlefield but off it as well.

Second season of successful travelogue Rag Rag Mein Ganga

In news

Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Shri Anurag Thakur unveiled the second season of successful travelogue Rag Rag Mein Ganga.

Details

- Season 2 of Rag Rag Mein Ganga travelogue will cover the cultural, mythological, historical and socio-economic details of this great river while being centric to the theme of nirmalta and aviralta.
- The travelogue will also establish the work being done by NMCG to save the majestic Ganga and bring it back to its for Doordarshan in collaboration with NMCG brings a travelogue series 'Rag Rag Mein Ganga' season 2.
- The show aims to bring attention the magnificence of the river Ganga and the need for its conservation. Poetically shot, the series will bring out the gorgeousness of the river and its landscape an account of the spiritual, religious, cultural and socioeconomic heritage of the river Ganga, and its present ecological condition.
- The travelogue, consisting of 26 episodes is being anchored by a well-known actor, Rajeev Khandelwal and **will go on air from 21st Aug 2021 every Saturday and Sunday at 8:30 P.M. on DD National.**

Background

- National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and Doordarshan have partnered to create wide awareness on the current state of Ganga and the need to rejuvenate Ganga to its past glory.
- In February, 2019 'Rag Rag Mein Ganga' a travelogue on India's holiest river – the Ganga was launched as a flagship programme on the National Broadcaster Doordarshan National Channel.
- Commissioned by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) this 21 part series covered the 2525 km long journey of the mighty Ganga from its source Gomukh Glacier to Gangasagar, where the river merges into the Bay of Bengal.
- Anchored by noted actor Rajeev Khandelwal, the travelogue covered 20 cities of cultural and socio-economic importance on the banks of the Ganges.

Online Trading of Energy Saving Certificates

In news

Government of India developed robust mechanism for Online Trading of Energy Saving Certificates

Details

- Government rewarded energy efficiency industries through energy saving certificates.
- Ministry of Power issued more than 57 lacs Energy Saving Certificates to 349 industrial units because they saved more energy than the targets.
- These units will be able to trade certificates through Power Exchange Portal after a month to those units who could not achieve their targets.
- The objective is to reduce consumption of fossil fuel, coal, oil and gas thereby leading to low carbon economy.

- This will not only enhance energy security for India but will also contribute towards climate goals as per the Paris Agreement.

Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT)

- One of the flagship initiative known as Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) was implemented under Cycle II (during 2016-19) covering 621 large industries from 11 sectors.
- Bureau of Energy Efficiency who is piloting this initiative completed the verification of energy savings achieved by these industries called as Designated Consumers (DCs).
- As per the audit reports received by BEE, total energy saving was more than 14 million tonne of oil equivalent (MTOE) which has also avoided 66 million tonnes CO2 emission.
- PAT scheme as a market-based mechanism, under National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE) is to enhance cost effectiveness through certification of excess energy savings in energy intensive industries that can be traded.
- The scheme seeks to reduce the specific energy consumption (SEC), i.e. energy used per unit of production in energy intensive large industries.
- Under this scheme, an Energy Audit is done to verify the baseline data (current level of efficiency) and thereafter energy saving targets are given.
- Energy Saving Certificates (ESCs) are issued to those plants that have achieved excess energy savings over their targets.

About BEE

- The Government of India has set up the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) on 1st March 2002 under the provision of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
- The mission of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency is to assist in developing policies and strategies with a thrust on self-regulation and market principles with the primary objective of reducing energy intensity of the Indian economy within the overall framework of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
- This will be achieved with active participation of all stakeholders, resulting in accelerated and sustained adoption of energy efficiency in all sectors.

Initiative by BRO to educate children

In news

Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has undertaken a noble deed of educating the children of Casual Paid Labourers (CPLs) who are employed by them for various road construction works on the Dharasu-Gangotri road in Uttarakhand.

Details

- Devoid of mobile connection & basic facilities, the officers and supervisors of BRO are imparting education to these children in the most inhospitable high-altitude terrain.
- BRO providing education to children of labourers employed for construction works in high-altitude areas of Uttarakhand
- 60-70 children attending outdoor classes in three camps
- BRO working with an NGO to provide clothing & ration to these children
- Plan to provide basic accommodation & better teaching facilities

Casual Paid Labourers (CPLs)

- The CPLs are the backbone of BRO as they work in inhospitable and difficult terrains to ensure construction of strategic border roads.

- They stay away from their homes for long durations and are cut off from society. Most of them working in these areas hail from Jharkhand or are those who reside near the Nepal border.
- The aim of this initiative is to engage with these young and often neglected minds by educating them and ensuring that their parents are encouraged and satisfied with the organisation they

"Karmayogi" Digital Learning Facility

In news

Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurates "Karmayogi" Digital Learning Facility for Civil Servants at the Institute of Secretariat Training & Management (ISTM).

Aim

Mission Karmayogi aims to create a dedicated work force not only of the Civil Services but more than that, it would serve the cause of the citizen at large. Such training modules will also be replicated at different State and Union Territory level also in due course.

Details

- This digital learning platform will help further extending the citizen centric reforms initiated by the Government.
- The Government's most ambitious reform 'Mission Karmayogi' is meant to upgrade the skills of Central Government officers and personnel.
- The path-breaking initiative has been taken to shift the working and functioning of the Civil Servants from 'Rule to Role', so that they are equipped to perform the tasks assigned to them.

Background

- The National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building ('NPCSCB') – "Mission Karmayogi" was approved by the Government on 2nd September, 2020 with the objective of enhancing governance through Civil Services Capacity Building.
- NPCSCB has been carefully designed to lay the foundations for capacity building for Civil Servants so that they remain entrenched in Indian Culture and sensibilities and remain connected, with their roots, while they learn from the best institutions and practices across the world.
- The training of Civil Servants at various Academies is being restructured to include optimum use of the digital learning platform of Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT).

New registration mark for new vehicles "Bharat series (BH-series)"

In news

Government has taken a host of citizen centric steps to facilitate mobility.

Details

- An IT based solution for vehicle registration is one such effort.
- However, one of the pain points in the vehicle registration process that needed attention was re-registration of a vehicle while moving to another state.
- This vehicle registration facility under "Bharat series (BH-series)" will be available on voluntary basis to Defense personnel, employees of Central Government/ State Government/ Central/ State Public Sector Undertakings and private sector companies/organizations, which have their offices in four or more States/Union territories.
- The motor vehicle tax will be levied for two years or in multiple of two.

- This scheme will facilitate free movement of personal vehicles across States/UTs of India upon relocation to a new State/UT.
- After completion of the fourteenth year, the motor vehicle tax shall be levied annually which shall be half of the amount which was charged earlier for that vehicle.

The registration mark will be in a YY BH #### XX format - where YY denotes the year of first registration, BH is code for Bharat Series, #### is the randomised four digit number and XX are two alphabets.

Fit India Mobile App

In news

To celebrate second anniversary of Fit India Movement and as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur launched the Fit India Mobile Application.

Fit India Movement

- Fit India Movement was launched on 29th August 2019, on the occasion of National Sports Day by Hon'ble PM with the aim to make fitness an integral part of the lives every Indian.
- The key message is Fitness is easy, fun and free, and can be practiced anywhere.

Objective

- To promote fitness as easy, fun and free
- To spread awareness on fitness and various physical activities that promote fitness through focused campaigns
- To encourage indigenous sports
- To make fitness reach every school, college/university, panchayat/village, etc.
- To create a platform for citizens of India to share information, drive awareness and encourage sharing of personal fitness stories

About the app

- The "My Plan" feature of Fit India Mobile App lets every Individual to define their current lifestyle – time spent on physical activity, water intake, sleep hours, current weight and targeted weight - to get a customised food plan, lifestyle changes for them to achieve his/her goals.
- Fit India App is free and available in English & Hindi on both the Android and the iOS platforms
- The Fit India App recommends Indian Food Plan, No. of Glasses of Water and no. of hours of Sleep.
- The "**Activity Tracker**" feature of the application helps Individuals to keep track of their daily activity levels.
- The real time Step Tracker helps Individuals to track their daily steps and encourages them to set higher goals for themselves.
- The App lets individuals to also track their daily Water Intake, Calorie Intake and Sleep Hours.
- Individuals can set hourly reminders and track their progress of Fitness Scores and Daily Activity over a period of time, share their fitness and activity data with other to motivate more people to take up fitness and lifestyle changes.