SEPTEMBER
2023

MONTHLY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS

G20
भारत 2023 INDIA

GS - I

CASTEISM IN INDIAN SOCIETY

Casteism entails a societal structure marked by the stratification of communities into castes, leading to disparities, discrimination, and unequal access to opportunities for individuals from varying caste backgrounds.

Efforts to eradicate caste-based discrimination in India:

Constitutional Provisions:

1. Articles 15 and 17 within the Indian Constitution explicitly prohibit discrimination based on caste.

2. Reservation Policies: These policies have been put in place to grant historically disadvantaged castes improved access to education, employment, and political representation, as exemplified by Article 330 and Article 332.

3. Legal Framework: Laws like the Scheduled Castes and the xScheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, provide vital protection against violence and discrimination faced by marginalized communities.

4. Awareness Campaigns: Public awareness campaigns, workshops, and seminars are regularly organized to sensitize society to the issue of caste-based discrimination.

5. Social Movements: Numerous social reform movements, led by activists, organizations, and leaders have tirelessly worked to challenge and transform traditional caste-based norms and practices.

Despite these ongoing efforts, caste-based discrimination continues to persist in Indian society, primarily due to the following reasons:

1. Historical Legacy:

Historical injustices and inequalities continue to influence perceptions and behaviours, perpetuating discriminatory practices.

2. Cultural Norms and Traditions:

Social customs, rituals, and restrictions on inter-caste marriages reinforce caste-based distinctions, making it challenging to break free from entrenched norms.

3. Power Dynamics:

Caste-based discrimination often correlates with power dynamics, as dominant castes seek to maintain their privileged positions, resulting in discrimination and exclusion against lower castes.

4. Economic Disparities:

Lower-caste individuals often face limited access to education, job opportunities, and resources, which perpetuates a cycle of poverty and marginalization and reinforces discriminatory practices.

5. Lack of Effective Implementation:

Despite the existence of laws and policies to address caste-based discrimination, their effective implementation remains a challenge, with weak enforcement, lack of awareness, and corruption hindering eradication efforts.

Conclusion: -

Addressing caste-based discrimination requires a multi-faceted approach that tackles both structural and attitudinal issues. It involves raising awareness, promoting education and economic opportunities, enforcing anti-discrimination laws, and fostering social and cultural change.

INCREASED RAIN AND REDUCED SNOWFALL IN THE HIMALAYAN REGION

A new study has found that mountains across the globe, including the Himalayas, are now seeing more rainfall at elevations where it has mostly snowed in the past.

Status of Rainfall and Snowfall in the Himalayan Region:

1. IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (2019):

The IPCC reported that snowfall had decreased in mountain regions, including the Himalayas, due to higher temperatures, particularly at lower elevations.

### 2. Changing Precipitation Patterns:

Scientific studies have indicated shifts in precipitation patterns in the Himalayan region, with more instances of extreme precipitation occurring as rainfall rather than snowfall, even at higher altitudes.

3. Changing Weather Patterns:

Alterations in atmospheric circulation, jet streams, and other weather systems can result in shifts in precipitation patterns.

4. Global Warming and Temperature Rise:

As global temperatures increase, the atmosphere can hold more moisture, leading to increased evaporation and subsequent precipitation.
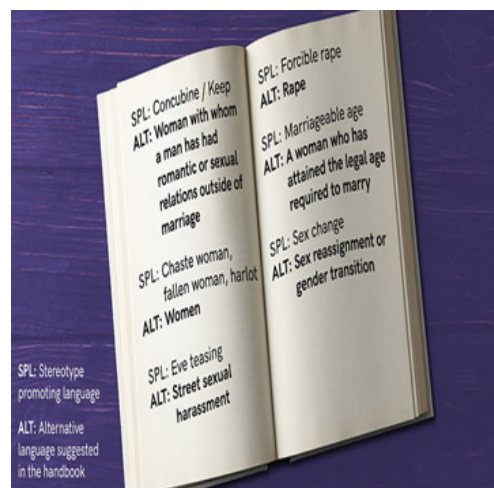
HANDBOOK ON COMBATING GENDER STEREOTYPES

• The Supreme Court has released a 30-page handbook aimed at eliminating gender stereotypes from legal language and proceedings.

• The "Handbook on Combating Gender Stereotypes" addresses unjust gender-based terms frequently used in Indian courts and offers accurate alternatives.

• It emphasizes the importance of using language that respects the rights and dignity of all individuals.

DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

In the context of India's 77th Independence Day, the article highlights the debate surrounding the origins of democracy and India's claim to being the "mother of democracy".

About Democracy

Democracy is a system of government where power is vested in the hands of the people, allowing them to participate in decision-making through voting and representation.

The debate:

- Western narrative claims that democracy was invented in ancient Athens before being rediscovered and spreading around the globe in modern times.
- While ancient Greece is often associated with the birth of democracy, India's historical references to democratic practices challenge this narrative.
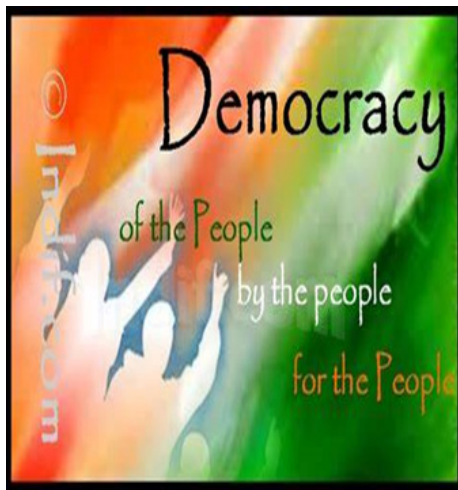
MARINE HEAT WAVES
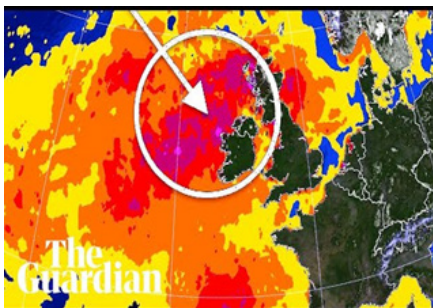
Extreme Heat waves are harming marine life in the Mediterranean Sea.

About

- At the end of July, Mediterranean Sea, surface temperatures hit a record 28.7 degrees.
- Celsius, with some eastern parts of the waters reaching more than 30.
- A marine heat wave, also known as an ocean heatwave or sea surface temperature anomaly, refers to a prolonged period of unusually warm sea surface temperatures in a specific ocean region.
- It's similar to a heatwave on land, but it affects the oceans.
- It occurs when the surface temperature of a particular region of the sea rises to 3 or 4 degree Celsius above the average temperature.
- Marine heat waves can have significant impacts on marine ecosystems, biodiversity, fisheries, and weather patterns.

Impact

Less availability of Oxygen:

1. Less availability of Oxygen: Gases like oxygen and carbon dioxide dissolve better at colder temperatures, so that means the warmer the water; the less oxygen is available to breathe.

2. Conversely, higher temperatures also cause an increase in metabolism, which in turn means animals have to breathe even more than usual.

3. Algal Blooms: Algal blooms are more common in hotter waters too. Such blooms can further deplete oxygen levels and produce toxins harmful for fish, marine mammals and birds, for instance.

4. Scientists observed mass deaths of benthic species along thousands of kilometres of Mediterranean coastline between 2015 and 2019. Benthic like soft corals, seaweed and seagrasses provide some of the main ocean habitats. Many benthic species are crucial to the marine ecosystem. They filter the water and keep seas, rivers and lakes clean by eating dead organisms.

Way Ahead

1. Governments must invest in nature-based solutions and ambitiously reduce fossil-

fuel-based emissions to limit the impacts of the climate crisis.

2. Scientists also hope that the UN goal of protecting 30% of the world's oceans by 2030 will directly benefit the Mediterranean. So far, just 8% of the sea is protected.

3. Above all, we need to increase the number of strictly protected areas where fishing, diving and boating are not allowed.

4. More research, better prediction and warning systems, and regional measures to build ocean resilience can help protect communities and ecosystems from MHWs.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE GLOBAL SUMMIT

The Ministry of Ayush and the World Health Organization (WHO) jointly organised the Traditional Medicine Global Summit on August 17th and 18th, 2023, in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India. This summit is focused on traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine.

Global Centre on Traditional Medicines:

1. The Global Centre on Traditional Medicines, established by the WHO, is located in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

2. This centre is the first of its kind in a developing country.

3. The Traditional Medicine Global Summit, hosted by the Ministry of Ayush, will explore the role of traditional medicines in addressing health challenges and promoting global health and sustainable development.

WHO Chief Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus praised India's Rich History of Traditional Medicine:

1. Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus praised India for its

historical contributions to traditional medicine, particularly Ayurveda and yoga.

2. He acknowledged their effectiveness in addressing health issues.

3. The WHO Chief stressed the importance of integrating ancient medicinal knowledge, such as Ayurveda and yoga, into the national health systems of various countries.

4. This integration would help harness the benefits of traditional medicine for the overall well-being of the population.

Ayush Visa:

1. The Ayush visa is a special type of visa designed to provide people from around the world with access to Indian traditional medicine systems.

2. "Ayush" stands for Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy "Ayush" stands for Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy – these are various traditional medicine systems practiced in India.

3. The Ayush visa is intended to allow individuals, particularly those seeking traditional health and wellness treatments, to come to India and experience these practices firsthand.

4. This type of visa facilitates global access to the knowledge and benefits of Indian traditional medicine.

SATYAGRAHA, AHIMSA INSPIRED GLOBAL LEADERS

Essence of the editorial

•   India's fight for independence is considered a significant landmark in modern world history. Satyagraha (passive resistance) and ahimsa (nonviolence) were foundational principles of India's struggle for freedom.

•   These principles inspired nationalist leaders worldwide and contributed to decolonization.

The Role of Mahatma Gandhi

•   Mahatma Gandhi was the architect of India's struggle, with a deep understanding of guiding millions of colonized people.

•   Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence (ahimsa) and passive resistance (satyagraha) was the foundation of the movement.

•   His belief in the strength of nonviolence and truth influenced global leaders.

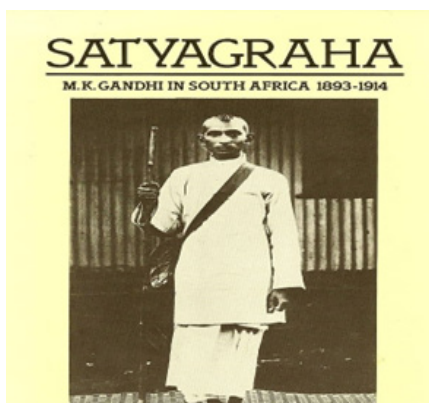## Gandhi's Principles of Nonviolence and Satyagraha:

•   Gandhi's principles of nonviolence and satyagraha were deeply intertwined.

•   Satyagraha, which means "truth force" or "soul force," was a strategy of using nonviolent means to confront injustice.

•   It was based on the belief that truth and morality were on the side of the oppressed, and by bearing suffering in a nonviolent manner, they could awaken the conscience of the oppressor.

•   Through satyagraha, Gandhi aimed to expose the inherent injustice of a situation and win the hearts and minds of both the oppressors and the public.

•   In essence, Gandhi's nonviolence was not passive submission; it was a courageous and active stance against oppression that aimed to bring about genuine social change. It demanded a deep commitment to truth, empathy, and self-discipline, with the ultimate goal of transforming individuals, societies, and even nations.

M N Roy's Contribution to Freedom

M N Roy's contribution to freedom revolved around his philosophy of radical humanism, which emphasized human dignity, individualism, and rationalism.

1. Humanism:

Roy's humanism emphasized the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. He believed that human beings were capable of rational thought and ethical behaviour, which should form the foundation of society.

2. Individualism:

Roy recognized the importance of individual rights and autonomy. He believed that individuals should have the freedom to develop their capacities, pursue their interests, and make choices that lead to self-fulfillment.

3. Rationalism:

Rationalism, as a pillar of radical humanism, promoted the use of reason and critical thinking. Roy advocated for a society where decisions and beliefs were based on evidence, logic, and rational discourse rather than dogma or superstition.

4. Global Impact of India's Freedom

- Nationalist movements globally were influenced by India's approach to freedom.

- British and French colonial powers gradually withdrew from their colonies.

SUBRAMANIA BHARATHI

Subramania Bharati

Father of Modern Tamil Literature

- President Droupadi Murmu unveiled a portrait of late nationalist Tamil poet-journalist Subramania Bharathi at the Raj Bhavan.

Subramania Bharathi

- C. Subramania Bharathi was a poet, freedom fighter and social reformer from Tamil Nadu.

- He was known as Mahakavi Bharathiyar and the laudatory epithet Mahakavi means a great poet.

- His songs on nationalism and freedom of India helped to rally the masses to support the Indian Independence Movement in Tamil Nadu.

- Durbar Hall on the campus was also renamed after him as Bharathiar Mandapam.

Contributions

As a Poet and Nationalist:

- Most parts of his compositions are classifiable as short lyrical outpourings on patriotic, devotional and mystic themes.

- "Kannan Pattu" "Nilavum Vanminum Katrum" "Panchali Sabatam" "Kuyil Pattu" are examples of his great poetic output.

- He exhorted the people to join the independence struggle and work vigorously for the liberation of the country.

- He outlined his vision for a free India and published the sensational "Sudesa Geethangal" in 1908.

As a Journalist:

- He was the sub-editor in "Swadesamitran" in November 1904.

- In order to proclaim its revolutionary ardour, Bharathi had the weekly printed in

red paper. "India" was the first paper in Tamil Nadu to publish political cartoons.

- He also published and edited a few other journals like "Vijaya".

As a Social Reformer:

- Bharathi was also against the caste system. He declared that there were only two castes-men and women and nothing more than that.

- Above all, he himself had removed his sacred thread. He had also adorned many Dalits with sacred thread. He used to take tea sold in shops run by Muslims. He along with his family members attended church on all festival occasions. He advocated temple entry of Dalits.

- He believed in women's rights, gender equality and women emancipation. He opposed child marriage, dowry and supported widow remarriage.

PINGALI VENKAYYA

About Pingali Venkayya:

- Pingali Venkayya (August 2, 1876 - July 4, 1963) was an Indian freedom fighter, linguist, and geologist. He was born in present-day Andhra Pradesh, India.

- Venkayya was proficient in several languages, including Telugu, Hindi, Urdu,

Bengali, Tamil and English.

Designing the Indian National Flag:

In 1921, during the All India Congress Committee meeting in Bezwada (present-day Vijayawada), Venkayya proposed the design of the Indian National Flag. The original design featured three stripes of saffron, white and green, with a spinning wheel in the middle, representing India's rural economy and the Khadi movement.

Recognition and Honors:

After India gained independence in 1947, the Indian government recognized Venkayya's contributions. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan, one of India's highest civilian honors, in 1955.

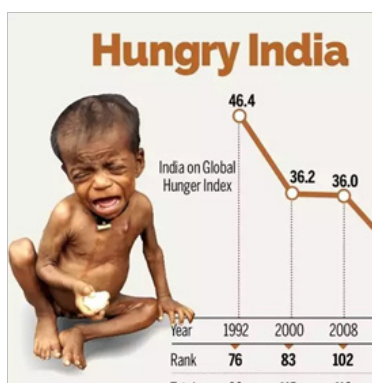### Contributions to the Indian Independence Movement:

Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's ideals, Venkayya actively participated in the Indian freedom struggle. He was a member of the Indian National Congress and played a role in various campaigns and agitations for independence.

GS - II

THE KEY TO INDIA'S HUNGER CHALLENGE

Status of India on Hunger:

• The Global Hunger Index 2022 ranks India at 107 (out of 121 countries) and the level of hunger and under-nutrition in the country is now at "serious".

• India's rank on this index has been worsening since 2020 – 94 in 2020 and 101 in 2021.

• With over 19%, India has the highest rate of child wasting (among under age 5 children) in the world.

• Over 16% of Indians are undernourished, and about one in every three children is stunted.

• According to the NFHS-5, 18% of mothers reported that their child (between ages 6-23 months) did not eat any food/"zero-food" in the 24 hours preceding the survey.

• Close to 40% did not eat any grains (roti, rice, etc) for an entire day, and six out of 10 children do not consume milk ("zero-milk").

Hungry India

India on Global Hunger Index

Year	1992	2000	2008
Rank	76	83	102
Total	96	115	118

EXPANSION OF BRICS

India is questioning the criteria for BRICS membership and seeks clear guidelines for new entrants.

About BRICS:
While there isn't a formal application process for joining BRICS, certain eligibility criteria are taken into consideration for potential new members:

1. Economic Size:
For instance, India has suggested a minimum GDP of $400 billion for new members.

2. Trade Volume:
Another parameter, as proposed by India, is a minimum BRICS trade volume of $50 billion with the new member.

3. Emerging Economy Status:
Prospective members should demonstrate characteristics of an emerging economy, including growth potential, industrialization, and a positive development trajectory.

4. Political Stability:
Membership often necessitates that the candidate country maintains a stable political environment, maintains good diplomatic relations with existing members, and is committed to democratic principles.

5. Mutual Consensus:
• Existing BRICS members typically need to reach a consensus on admitting new members, which is a crucial step in the expansion process.

• India's perspective on the expansion of BRICS has been cautious. It has not been particularly enthusiastic about this process, viewing it as primarily initiated by China to bolster its influence within the grouping. However, as other BRICS members, including Brazil, have shown openness to expansion, India has agreed to participate in the BRICS expansion plan, even with some relaxation in the GDP and trade criteria. This decision reflects a balancing act between India's interests and the evolving dynamics within the BRICS alliance.

GAPS IN REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS (RBD) AMENDMENT ACT

The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2023 seeks to amend the 1969 Act. It was introduced in Lok Sabha on July 26, 2023.

Key Features of the Bill

1. Database of births and deaths:

The Act provides for the appointment of a Registrar-General, India who may issue general directions for registration of births and deaths. The Bill adds that the Registrar General will maintain a national database of registered births and deaths. The Chief Registrar shall maintain a similar database at the state level.

2. Electronic certificates:

The Act provides that any person may:

(i) Cause a search to be made by the Registrar for any entry in a register of births and deaths and

(ii) Obtain an extract from the register related to any birth or death. The Bill amends this to provide for obtaining a birth or death certificate (electronically or otherwise) instead of extracts.

3. Aadhaar details of parents and informants required:

The Act requires certain persons to report births and deaths to the Registrar.

For example, the medical officer in charge of a hospital where a baby is born must report the birth.

The Bill adds that, in cases of births, the specified persons shall also provide the Aadhaar number of the parents and the informant.

4. Connecting database:

The Bill states that the national database may be made available to other authorities preparing or maintaining other databases. Such databases include:

(i) Population register,

(ii) Electoral rolls,

(iii) Ration card and

(iv) any other national databases as notified. The use of the national database must be approved by the central government.

Similarly, the state database may be made available to authorities dealing with other state databases, subject to state government approval.

5. Use of birth certificate:

The Bill requires the use of birth and death certificates to prove the date and place of birth for persons born on or after this Bill comes into effect.

The information will be used for purposes including:

(i) Admission to an educational institution,

(ii) Preparation of voter lists,

(iii) Appointment to a government post and

(iv) Any other purpose determined by the central government.

6. Appeal process:

Any person aggrieved by any action or order of the Registrar or District Registrar may appeal to the District Registrar or Chief Registrar, respectively. Such an appeal must be made within 30 days from receipt of such action or order. The District Registrar or Chief Registrar must give their decision within 90 days from the date of appeal.

PIPED WATER CONNECTION

Over two-thirds (66%) of rural households in India now have piped water connections, a significant leap from the 2019 baseline of 17%. This achievement was highlighted on the dashboard of India's flagship drinking water programme, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).

Overview

• Launched in 2019, it envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024.

• JJM looks to create a Jan Andolan for water, thereby making it everyone's priority. It comes under Jal Shakti Ministry.

Aims:

• The mission ensures functionality of existing water supply systems and water connections, water quality monitoring and testing as well as sustainable agriculture.

• It also ensures judicious use of conserved water; drinking water source augmentation, drinking water supplies system, grey water treatment and its reuse.

3 NEW BILLS BEING INTRODUCED TO REPLACE THE IPC, CRPC, AND INDIAN EVIDENCE ACT

Recently, the Indian government has introduced three new bills in Lok Sabha to replace the British-era IPC, CrPC, and Indian Evidence Act and had referred them to the standing committees.

Objectives

1. The objective of these bills is to modernize the criminal justice system by updating laws, incorporating digital interfaces, expediting trials, and reducing delays in the disposal of cases
2. The bills also promote the use of technology for trials, appeals, and recording evidence.
3. The proposed legislation aims to overhaul the criminal justice system by repealing the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, which are currently in use.
4. The bills also include provisions to include certain social and economic offenses in the Indian Penal Code.

Centre Introduces Bills To Replace IPC, CrPC & Indian Evidence Act In Lok Sabha
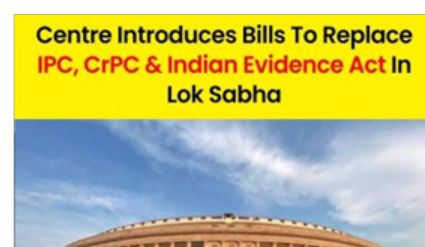
LANCET STUDY ON NUTRITION AND TB LINKAGE

• New studies published in The Lancet and The Lancet Global Health journals provide evidence that improved nutrition can significantly reduce tuberculosis (TB) incidence and mortality in India. The study is backed by India's ICMR.

• Reducing Activation of Tuberculosis by Improvement of Nutritional Status (RATIONS) trial conducted in Jharkhand (the state has a high TB burden) revealed: Better nutrition among patients with lung TB can lead to a 40% reduction in all forms of TB and a nearly 50% reduction in infectious TB.

• Underweight TB patients who experience early weight gain can have their risk of mortality reduced by 60%.

• Nearly 30 households would need to be provided nutritional supplementation to prevent one case of TB.

Significance:

• The trials' findings are particularly significant as undernutrition has emerged as a leading risk factor for TB worldwide.

• These results could have policy implications and contribute to India's goal of eliminating TB by 2025.

About Tuberculosis:

(TB) is an infectious disease

Caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis.
It primarily affects the lungs but can also affect other parts of the body.

Status of TB in India and the world:

As per the WHO Global TB Report 2022:

• India's TB incidence for the year 2021 is 210 per 100,000 population (a decline of over 18% from 2020).

• India has a large burden of the world's TB, with an estimated economic cost of US$100 million lost annually due to this disease.

BHARAT NCAP

From October 1, car manufacturers can volunteer to get a star rating indicating the safety of their models in a crash, under an indigenous programme for testing.

About

The Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat NCAP) is modelled on the Global New Car Assessment Programme (Global NCAP).

The Global NCAP is a project of the Towards Zero Foundation, a U.K.-registered charity that

promotes universal adoption of the United Nation's most important motor vehicle safety standards worldwide.

Key features –

1. The new programme will be applicable to passenger vehicles with not more than 8 seats in addition to the driver's seat with gross vehicle weight not exceeding 3,500 kg.

2. It will be based on the soon-to-be published Automotive Industry Standard 197, which lays down testing protocols.

DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION LAW

Recently the Lok Sabha has passed the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023.

Key Provisions of the Bill

Applicability:

The Bill applies to the processing of digital personal data within India where such data is:

(i) Collected online, or
 (ii) collected offline and is
Digitised.

It will also apply to the processing of personal data outside India if it is for offering goods or services in India.

Consent:

Personal data may be processed only for a lawful purpose after obtaining the consent of the individual. A notice must be given before seeking consent.

The notice should contain details about the personal data to be collected and the purpose of processing.

Data Protection Board of India:

The central government will establish the Data Protection Board of India.

Key functions of the Board include:

(i) monitoring compliance and imposing penalties.

(ii) Directing data fiduciaries to take necessary measures in the event of a data breach and

(iii) Hearing grievances made by affected persons.

Board members will be appointed for two years and will be eligible for re-appointment.

Exemptions:

Rights of the data principal and obligations of data fiduciaries (except data security) will not apply in specified cases.

These include:

(i) Prevention and investigation of offences,

and

(ii) Enforcement of legal rights or claims. The central government may, by notification, exempt certain activities from the application of the Bill.

These include:

Processing by government entities in the interest of the security of the state and public order, and research, archiving, or statistical purposes.

Need of Strong Data Protection Regime

Data a new oil to Industry:

As India's data economy grows, it finds itself grappling with regulation in order to catch up with the rich data that Indians are sharing every day, as they log onto hundreds of platforms—whether to bank electronically or to purchase groceries or to stay connected on social media.

Threats posed to Digital Economy:

Risk exposure to the digital economy has increased manifolds amidst the pandemic. For example, Ransomware, the data breach at Mobikwik.

1. Internet Crime:

Several instances of internet crimes like cybercrime, cyberbullying and harassment

2. National Security Concern:

Data of security agencies could be at risk compromising national security and many private entities are against data localisation.

3. Surveillance state:

Inadequate data protection legislation and unlimited government access can lead to a totalitarian regime (Aadhar Act).

Currently, Personal data is regulated by IT Act, 2000. However, this Act was applicable only to foreign companies & corporates working in India.

4. Puttaswamy v India (2017):

Supreme Court has declared Data Privacy as a Fundamental Right under Article 21.

ANNOUNCED ON 77TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of the 77th Independence Day announced a host of schemes for skilled workers, women self-help groups and the urban poor among others.

About

The Prime Minister started his Independence Day speech by highlighting India's position as the largest democracy globally.

He talked about the sacrifices made by freedom fighters such as Mahatma Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghosh, and their compatriots. He highlighted that the policies of the government are providing support to the youth of the country and their strength has helped India become the third largest startup ecosystem in the world.

About the Schemes 'Vishwakarma Yojana':

It will be launched on occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti,benefiting individuals

skilled in traditional craftsmanship, particularly from the OBC community.

Weavers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, laundry workers, barbers, and such families will be empowered through the 'Vishwakarma Yojana', which will begin with an allocation of around 13-15 thousand crore rupees.

Lakhpati Didi:

• The government is planning skill development training for two crore women under the 'Lakhpati Didi' scheme that aims to encourage them to start micro-enterprises

• Under it,skill training will be provided to women so that they can earn at least Rs 1 lakh annually.

• 15,000 women's SHGs would be given loan and training for operating and repairing drones.

• The government will provide drones to thousands of such women SHGs.

• Drone services will be available for agricultural work.

• It is likely to speed up adoption of drone technology in the field of agriculture and will lead to substantial employment generation and agribusiness opportunities in rural areas.

Housing Scheme:

• Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a new scheme to help urban poor build houses in cities.

• Under this programme, they would receive relief in interest rates and loans taken from banks to construct their houses. It will benefit those families that live in cities but are living in rented houses, or slums, or chawls and unauthorised colonies.

• If this section wants to build their own houses, the government will assist them with

a relief in interest rates and loans from banks that will help them save lakhs of rupees.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF UN

Recently, the Government of India defended the use of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam in the G-20 logo as China raised objections.

About Official Languages of UN

1. The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945.

2. Currently made up of 193 Member States, the UN and its work are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter.

3. Multilingualism enables communication between the UN's linguistically and culturally diverse Member States within the meeting rooms and halls of the UN.
By promoting tolerance, multilingualism also ensures increased participation of all Member States in the Organization's work, as well as greater effectiveness, better outcomes and more involvement.

4. There are six official languages of the UN.

These are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

5. The correct interpretation and translation of these six languages, in both spoken and written form, is very important to the work of the Organization, because this enables clear and concise communication on issues of global importance.

PRADHAN MANTRI UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (PM-USHA) SCHEME

Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are among 14 States and Union Territories, which are yet to sign a crucial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Union Education Ministry"s flagship education scheme "Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) Scheme".

Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) Scheme:

Ministry of Education's scheme to improve the quality of higher education in State Universities.

Aim – To improve quality through curricular & programme changes, teacher training, physical and digital infrastructure, accreditation, and enhancing employability, while ensuring equity, access, and inclusion. States are required to sign a MoU with the Centre.

The MoU mandates the implementation of the National Education Policy in order to avail funds for the next 3 years, under the Centre's flagship scheme for State-run higher education.

WELL ON TRACK AFTER 76 YEARS OF FREEDOM

Essence of the editorial:

The editorial reflects on India's journey of 76 years since gaining independence. It acknowledges the challenges faced, both internal and external, along with the achievements attained.

Background:

India achieved independence from British colonial rule on August 15, 1947,

The journey of India post-independence has seen achievements and challenges.

Milestones achieved so far:

1960s-1970s

Green Revolution:
The 1960s saw the Green Revolution, increasing agricultural production and ensuring food security.

Space Program: India's space program began with the launch of the Aryabhata satellite in 1975, marking its entry into space exploration.

1980s:
Nuclear Power and Pokhran Tests:

India conducted its first successful nuclear test in 1974, followed by further tests in 1998, demonstrating its nuclear capabilities.

1990s:
Economic Reforms:

Economic liberalization in the 1990s led to increased foreign investment, privatization, and globalization.

Information Technology (IT) Boom:
India emerged as a global IT hub, contributing to economic growth and technological advancements.

2000s-2010s:
Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan):

In 2014, India's Mars Orbiter Mission made it the fourth space agency globally to reach Mars orbit and the first to do so in its maiden attempt.

Economic Growth:

India sustained high economic growth rates, making it one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

Rights and Welfare Initiatives:
Legislation like Right to Information (RTI) Act, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), and Aadhaar aimed to empower citizens and improve welfare.

2020s:
COVID-19 Vaccine Production: India emerged as a major player in producing COVID-19 vaccines, contributing to global vaccination efforts.

Digital Payments and Financial Inclusion: Rapid growth in digital payments and the establishment of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) boosted financial inclusion.

Legal and Political Landmarks:

Landmark Supreme Court judgments, including the triple talaq verdict and Ayodhya dispute settlement.

Integration of Jammu and Kashmir by revoking Article 370.

CBI ACADEMY JOINS INTERPOL GLOBAL ACADEMY NETWORK

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Academy recently joined the Interpol Global Academy Network.

About

The network supports academic collaboration among law enforcement training institutions across the world.

The CBI Academy had become the 10th member of Interpol Global Academy Network.

Benefits

Global Recognition:

Membership demonstrates India's commitment to global law enforcement collaboration and modernization.

Comprehensive Training:

The network provides access to specialized courses, ensuring a well-rounded skill set for Indian officers.

Strategic Partnerships:

Collaborative efforts enable joint initiatives and investigations for more effective crime prevention and resolution.

Cross-Border Insights:

Interaction with international peers offers insights into cross-border crime trends and effective countermeasures.

Technological Advancement:

Learning from global experts supports India's adoption of cutting-edge technologies in crime detection and prevention.

Resource Sharing:

The network facilitates sharing of information, data, and resources for improved intelligence-led policing.

Transnational Crime Combat:

Membership aids in combating crimes that transcend borders, such as cybercrime and terrorism, through shared knowledge and resources.

CBI Academy

The CBI Academy is based in Ghaziabad, is a premier training institution in the fields of crime investigation, prosecution and vigilance functioning.

Foundation stone of the CBI Academy was laid by Smt Margaret Alva.

Over the years, CBI Academy has emerged as a major police institution of the country & South Asia. CBI Academy has imparted training to over 50,000 police officers since 2005 including around 1432 foreign nationals from SAARC Nations, Africa, South East Asia,

Central Asia and West-Asia.

The CBI is a nodal body for all matters related to INTERPOL.

INTERPOL Global Academy network

INTERPOL Global Academy Network was launched in 2019 with the aim of supporting INTERPOL in leading a global approach to Law Enforcement Training.

The Network has members in all regions and supports academic collaboration amongst Law Enforcement Training Institutions across the globe.

ARTICLE 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION

The resolution moved by Kerala CM was passed unanimously to change the name of a state to Keralam, requires the approval from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

About:

The earliest epigraphic record that mentions Kerala is emperor Asoka's Rock Edict II of 257 BC.

The inscription refers to the local ruler as Keralaputra, and also son of Chera referring to the Chera dynasty.

About Keralam, scholars believe it could have originated from Cheram.

When it was decided to reorganise states on a linguistic basis, the State Reorganisation Commission of the Union Government recommended creation of the state of Kerala.

The state of Kerala came into being on November 1, 1956.

In Malayalam, the state was referred to as Keralam, while in English it was Kerala.

Article 3 of the Indian Constitution deals with the power of the Parliament to alter the areas, boundaries, or names of states.

Parliamentary Authority:

Article 3 grants the authority to the Parliament of India to initiate legislation related to the alteration of the names, boundaries, or territories of existing states.

Reshaping States:

This article empowers the Parliament to create new states, merge or separate existing states, or alter their boundaries to accommodate administrative, cultural, or geographical considerations.

Consultation with Concerned States:

Before introducing a bill related to the alteration of state boundaries, the President is required to refer the bill to the concerned state's legislature for expressing its views within a reasonable period. However, the President is not bound by these views.

No Consent Required:

Article 3 does not mandate obtaining consent for altering the boundaries or names of states. The President can act based on the views received or other considerations.

Union Territories:

The powers under Article 3 extend to the creation of union territories as well. This means that the Parliament can establish or modify the territories and boundaries of union territories.

Safeguarding National Interests:

While the Constitution empowers the Parliament to alter state boundaries, this power is intended to be exercised judiciously, considering national interests, linguistic, cultural, and administrative factors, as well as the views of the concerned states.

State Legislature Role:

While the views of the concerned state legislature are taken into account, the final authority to determine the alteration of states or their boundaries rests with the Parliament.

GITA MITTAL COMMITTEE

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud recently announced the appointment of an all-women's committee of three former High Court judges to oversee violence-torn Manipur.

About the committee:

It will be headed by Justice Gita Mittal, former Chief Justice of the Jammu &

Kashmir High Court and Justice Shalini Phansalkar Joshi and Justice Asha Menon will be the members of the committee.

This will be a broad-based committee which will be constituted to supervise, intervene and monitor relief and rehabilitation, restoration of homesteads, religious places of worship, better relief work, etc.

MANIPUR: THE WAY AHEAD

Essence of the Editorial

This editorial discusses the current situation in Manipur, India, where violent clashes between the Kuki and Meitei communities have resulted in significant unrest and damage. It delves into the impact of the violence on the state and the country as a whole, and suggests possible solutions to restore normalcy and peace.

Background:

- The violence in Manipur started with clashes between the Kuki and Meitei communities on May 3.

- The situation escalated further when two naked women were paraded in an obscure village on May 4, and the video of the incident went viral on social media on July 19.

- The violence has continued despite the presence of security forces, and the state machinery seems helpless and unable to control the situation effectively.

The Meitei-Kuki Divide:
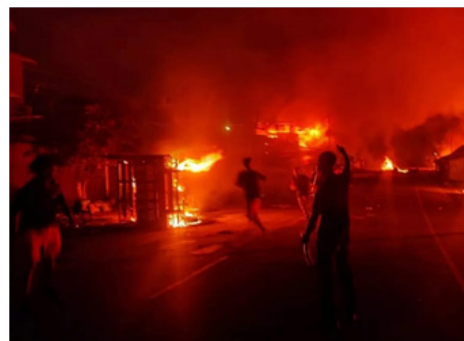
- The Meiteis, being the dominant community with 58% of the population, are concerned about being challenged by the Kuki community, which accounts for only 12% of the population.

- The Meiteis are also worried about the Kukis' prosperity in terms of employment and education due to their Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

- The continuous migration of Chin-Kukis from Myanmar has further added to the Meiteis' concerns.

Consequences:

- The violence has embarrassed India internationally and negatively affected its Look East Policy, in which Manipur plays a pivotal role.

- The violence has led to total isolation between the two warring communities,

with schools, colleges, and offices closed, and the business community suffering.

- Thousands of people are in relief camps in Manipur and Mizoram, which has been affected due to an influx of refugees from Manipur.

Possible Solutions:

- To restore normalcy, the government could review or suspend the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with the Kuki groups, allowing security forces to take action against militants involved in the clashes.

- The Manipur government's complaint about Kuki infiltration from Myanmar should be addressed through cooperation with the Myanmar government and potential border fencing.

- Involvement of various stakeholders, such as politicians, militants, and drug lords, in the violence should be tackled to create a conducive environment for peace.

- Recovery of looted arms is crucial, and the government should consider deploying additional women's police battalions to strengthen security forces.

- The dominant Meitei community should respect the sentiments of the Kukis to alleviate tensions and promote peace and development.

PM-KUSUM SCHEME

Each farmer will receive a 60% subsidy to set up tube wells and pump sets. They will also get 30% of the total cost as a loan from the Government.

Recently, the government said that nearly 2.46 lakh farmers have benefitted from the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM Scheme).

About

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha is also known as Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM KUSUM) Scheme.

It has been launched by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) to facilitate the installation of solar pumps and grid-connected solar and other renewable power plants across India.

Objectives of PM KUSUM:-

1. To subsidize farmers to install solar irrigation pumps for cultivation.

2. To ensure energy security for farmers in India,

3. To honour India's commitment sources to 40% by 2030 as part of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).

Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs):

These are the intended reductions in greenhouse gas emissions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Each farmer will receive a 60% subsidy to set up tube wells and pump sets. They will also get 30% of the total cost as a loan from the Government.

NASHA MUKT BHARAT ABHIYAN

PM Modi in his 'Mann Ki Baat' hails the fight against drugs, and speaks about transformation in Bichharpur village in Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh (Mini Brazil), which was infamous for illicit liquor.

About Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan

1. The program, started in 2020 by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, was started with a target of 272 of the most vulnerable districts.

2. On August 15, 2020, the Centre had launched the Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan, which had so far reached more than 11 crore people.

3. India had created a unique record of destroying 10 lakh kg of drugs worth 12,000 crore in the past year. Just about two weeks ago, 1.5 lakh kg of seized drugs was destroyed.

4. The program also prioritizes community involvement to promote a sense of responsibility in tackling substance abuse and promote a healthy, productive society.

NATIONAL DIGITAL NAGRIK FORUM

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) announced the establishment of the National Digital Nagrik Forum.

About

1. The National Digital Nagrik Forum is an online platform initiated by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT).

2. The forum's primary objective is to advance the rights of traders, consumers, and various sections of society while promoting the digital trade economy.

3. It aims to create awareness about digital regulations and enhance citizens' capacity to engage with digital innovations through expert sessions and instructional materials.

4. The forum intends to contribute to the Government of India's vision of building a trillion-dollar digital economy while ensuring an open, safe, trusted, and accountable internet ecosystem.

To achieve its objectives, the forum will

organize awareness camps, digital and physical dialogues, training programs, and targeted outreach to stakeholders from the government, private sector, and civil society.

AYUSHMAN BHARAT DIGITAL MISSION (ABDM)

The inaugural ABDM Micro site, initiated as part of the 100 Microsites Project by the National Health Authority, has been inaugurated in Aizawl, Mizoram.

About

- The National Health Authority (NHA) introduced the 100 Microsites project to fast-track the adoption of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) nationwide.

- Mizoram takes the lead as the first state in India to activate an ABDM Microsite in Aizawl, its capital city.

- The initiative aims to digitize healthcare facilities, including private clinics, small hospitals, and labs, offering digital health services to patients.

- The Microsites focus on enrolling small healthcare providers, mainly overseen by State Mission.

- Directors of ABDM with NHA's financial support.

- Patients can link health records to Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts (ABHAs) via ABDM-enabled Personal Health Record (PHR) applications on their phones.

- NHA's past Microsites pilots in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, and Surat informed the structure of the 100 Microsites project under ABDM.

Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)

Launched in September 2021 via a Prime Minister-led video conference

Goal:

- Issue digital health IDs for all Indians, facilitating electronic access to health records for hospitals, insurance companies, and citizens.

- Pilot project announced on 15th August 2020 from the Red Fort by the Prime Minister.

- Initial implementation in six States & Union Territories.

- Implemented by the National Health Authority (NHA) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Features:

ABDM Sandbox:

Supports tech and product testing.

Aids private entities to join digital health system.

ABHA Mobile App (Ayushman Bharat Health Account):

Integrates health records, public health, insurance, and ABHA numbers.

Provides convenient record access.

Ayushman Bharat Health Account

Number (ABHA Number):

Identifies and authenticates individuals for health records.

Works across systems with patient consent.

Collects key details like demographics, family, and contact info.

ELECTION COMMISSIONERS APPOINTMENT BILL

The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023, was recently introduced in Rajya Sabha.

About:-

Appointment of election Commissioners:

The Supreme Court while examining a series of petitions seeking functional independence for Election Commissioners had ruled that the selection panel should comprise the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India (CJI).

This selection panel to be continued until Parliament enacts a law on the manner of appointment.

Issue of incompletion of tenure:

The SC also noted that although the CEC's tenure is six years under 'The Chief Election Commissioner And Other Election Commissioners (Conditions Of Service) Act, 1991', no CEC has completed his tenure since 2004.

The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023:

About:

*   The bill repeals the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991.

*   As per Article 324 of the Constitution, the Election Commission consists of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and such number of other Election Commissioners (ECs), as the President may decide.

*   The CEC and other ECs are appointed by the President.

*   The Bill specifies the same composition of the Election Commission.

Selection Committee:

•   The Bill has proposed that the selection panel for appointing the Election Commission, comprising the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners (ECs), will consist of The Prime Minister as the chairperson, The Leader of the Opposition as a member, and A Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister as another member.

•   The bill removed the Chief Justice of India (CJI) from a previously constituted three-member panel to select the Chief Election.

Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners.

Search Committee:

A Search Committee will prepare a panel of five persons for the consideration of the Selection Committee. The Search Committee will be headed by the Cabinet Secretary.

Qualification of CEC and ECs:

Persons who are holding or have held posts equivalent to the rank of Secretary to the central government will be eligible to be appointed as CEC and ECs. Such persons must have expertise in managing and conducting elections.

Removal and resignation:

- Under Article 324 of the Constitution, the CEC can only be removed from his office in a manner similar to that of a Supreme Court judge.

- This is done through an order of the President, based on a motion passed by both Houses of Parliament in the same session.

- The motion for removal must be adopted with:

  (i) majority support of total membership of each House,

  and (ii) at least two-thirds support from members present and voting.

- An EC can only be removed from office on the recommendation of the CEC.

- Further, the 1991 Act provides that the CEC and other ECs may submit their resignation to the President.

- The Bill retains this removal & resignation procedure.

Criticisms

Making EC a puppet:

- This composition of the selection panel puts a question mark on the neutrality of the Election Commission (EC) as the selection panel would effectively have two members of the ruling party— the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Minister.

- The Opposition has been arguing that the replacement of the CJI with a Cabinet Minister in the Bill indicates that the government is trying to make the poll body a puppet.

Against the spirit of fundamental rights:

- The court judgment says that the right to vote is a fundamental right, effectuated by the Election Commission through the conduct of elections.

- And therefore, to ensure that this right can be exercised properly, the Election Commission has to be independent of the executive.

- So, while the Bill, as proposed, follows the letter of the judgment, it does not at all follow the spirit of the judgment.

SVAMITVA SCHEME

SVAMITVA Scheme by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj wins 2023 National e-Governance Gold Award for Citizen-Centric Tech Application.

About:

National Awards for e-Governance are presented every year for exemplary implementation of e-Governance initiatives to recognize and promote excellence in implementation of e-Governance initiatives.

The SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages Abadi and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) Scheme, initiated by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, has been honored with the prestigious National Award for e-Governance 2023 (Gold) in recognition of its groundbreaking application of emerging technologies to deliver citizen-centric services.

Purpose of Award

1. Recognize achievements in the area of e-Governance.

2. Disseminate knowledge on effective methods of designing and implementing sustainable e-Governance initiatives.

3. Encourage incremental innovations in successful e-Governance solutions.

4. Promote and exchange experiences in solving problems, mitigating risks, resolving issues and planning for success.

About the Scheme

1. SVAMITVA stands for Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas.

2. The scheme's objectives will be executed through collaboration among the Revenue Department, Land Records Department, State Panchayati Raj Department, and the Nodal Ministry in each state.

3. The scheme aims to offer a comprehensive property validation solution for rural India.

4. Government authorities will issue SVAMITVA Property cards to landowners as part of the scheme.

5. Demarcation of rural inhabited areas will be carried out using Drone Surveying technology and Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS).

6. This approach will allow homeowners to leverage their houses for loans and other financial needs.

7. Over a span of 4 years (2020-2024), drone-based mapping will gradually cover all villages.

8. The scheme's initial phase is applicable in 6 states: Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

9. The Central Government funds the scheme, allocating Rs 79.65 crores for the pilot phase.

GS - III

RBI'S STATE OF THE ECONOMY REPORT

The State of the Economy report suggests that despite a global slowdown, the Indian economy has likely maintained healthy growth in the first quarter of the current financial year.

Key findings of the Report:

1. The RBI predicts 8% economic growth for April-June.

2. Global Recovery Status-

The global economic recovery is slowing down.

3. Export Situation-

Exports decreased by around 16% in July. Merchandise exports hit a nine-month low of $32.25 billion.

4. Positive Economic Indicators-

Private consumption and investment activity may counterbalance export decline.

E-way bill volumes showed robust growth.

FMCG sales experienced an increase.

Cargo at major ports and railway freight traffic rose in July.

5. Steel and cement consumption witnessed growth.

6. Areas of Economic Concern-

Automobile sales, except three-wheelers, are low.

More households/individuals are seeking MGNREGA work compared to last year.

Non-oil imports decreased, indicating weak domestic demand.

Uncertainty surrounds the extent of investment increase.

7. Investment Intention Study-

In 2022-23, plans were made for 982 projects worth over Rs 3 lakh crore.

60% of projects funded by banks and institutions are in infrastructure.

Major areas: power, roads, bridges, SEZs, biotech, and IT parks. Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Maharashtra, and Karnataka account for over half the project cost.

CHANDRAYAAN-3 SCRIPTS HISTORY

India has created history as it became the first country to land on the South Pole of the lunar surface. PM Modi congratulated Indians and space scientists for the achievement.

About:

India on Wednesday scripted history with the successful soft landing of its lunar mission Chandrayaan-3 on the South Pole region of the Moon.

With this achievement, India has become the first country to land on the Moon's challenging south pole region.

What is Chandrayaan-3 Mission?

Chandrayaan-3 is India's third lunar mission.

It is follow-on to the unsuccessful 2019 lunar mission Chandrayaan-2.

It will demonstrate India's end-to-end capability in safe landing and roving on the lunar surface.

Objective –

The mission's main objectives are:

• To demonstrate safe and soft landing on the lunar surface

• To demonstrate rover roving on the moon and

• To conduct in-situ (on-site) scientific experiments.

• It also aims to develop and demonstrate new technologies required for interplanetary missions.

DEFINITION OF GREEN HYDROGEN IN INDIA

As a significant step in progressing the National Green Hydrogen Mission, the Indian government has formally launched the Green Hydrogen Standard.

Green Hydrogen Standard

• The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has formulated the Green Hydrogen Standard to establish benchmarks for hydrogen production, verifying its renewable source.

• This standard encompasses hydrogen generated through electrolysis and biomass-based methods.

• After consultations with stakeholders, Green Hydrogen is defined as having well-to-gate emissions not exceeding 2 kg CO_2 equivalent per kg H2.

About

• The MNRE will develop a comprehensive framework for assessing, reporting, authenticating, and certifying green hydrogen and its derivatives.

• The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power is responsible for accrediting agencies overseeing Green.

• Hydrogen projects.

• The Green Hydrogen Standard provides clarity to India's Green Hydrogen community, meeting anticipated expectations.

• India's adoption of this standard positions it as a pioneer in defining Green Hydrogen and reaffirms its commitment to sustainable hydrogen production.

Colour-coded Hydrogen

Green Hydrogen: Made from renewable energy via electrolysis, emitting no CO_2 during production.

Blue Hydrogen: Produced from natural gas with carbon capture, reducing CO_2 emissions.

Grey Hydrogen: Commonly made from

natural gas, lacks CO2 capture.

Black/Brown Hydrogen: Created from coal, highly environmentally harmful.

Pink/Purple/Red Hydrogen: Generated by nuclear-powered electrolysis, expanding hydrogen options.

Turquoise Hydrogen: Emerging method using methane pyrolysis, reliant on renewable energy and carbon storage.

Yellow Hydrogen: Derived from solar-powered electrolysis.

White Hydrogen: Natural hydrogen from underground deposits, not yet utilized.

MALABAR EXERCISE

The 27th edition of Exercise MALABAR concluded on the East Coast of Australia off Sydney.

About:

Malabar Exercise is a multilateral naval exercise that includes simulated war games and combat maneuvers.

Aim - To demonstrate the synergy, coordination and inter-operability among the participating navies.

Formation - Started in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between the navies of India and the US.

Current Members - Exercise Malabar is a naval exercise involving the United States, Japan, Australia and India as permanent partners.

2023 Exercise

The Indian Navy was represented by indigenously built Destroyer INS Kolkata, Frigate INS Sahyadri and P8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft.

The exercise saw participation of Ships, Submarines and aircraft from the Indian Navy (IN), Royal Australian Navy (RAN), Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) and the US Navy (USN).

Exercise MALABAR 23 was conducted in two phases, which included a harbour phase and a sea phase.

ADITYA L1

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has planned its next launch of the Aditya L1 satellite in September, 2023.

About:

Aditya L1 shall be the first space-based Indian mission to study the Sun.

Launched by: ISRO.

Launch Vehicle: PSLV-XL. (PSLV-C54 launch)

Destination:

The spacecraft shall be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system, which is about 1.5 million km from the Earth.

Objectives of Aditya L1:-

- Study of Solar upper atmosphere

- Study of chromospheres and coronal heating, physics of the partially ionized plasma, initiation of the coronal mass ejections, and flares.

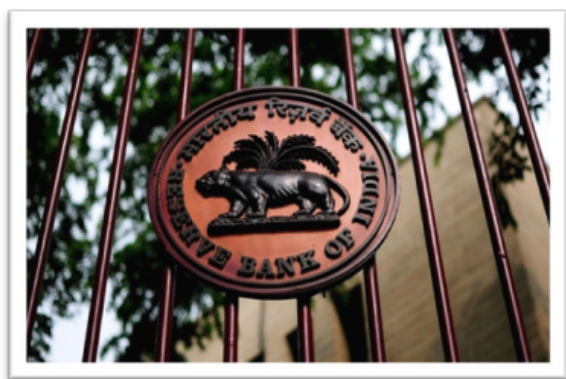**Sun's corona:** the outermost layer of its atmosphere.

Study of the Physics of the solar corona and its heating mechanism.

Study of Diagnostics of the coronal and coronal loops plasma: Temperature, velocity, and density.

Study of Magnetic field topology and magnetic field measurements in the solar corona.

RESERVE BANK INNOVATION HUB (RBIH)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced the development of a Public Tech Platform for 'frictionless credit' by the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH).

About

- It is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) set-up to promote and facilitate an environment that accelerates innovation across the financial sector.

- RBIH will provide the platform to anchor a shared vision among all financial ecosystem stakeholders and aid them in crafting forward-looking innovation strategies while addressing the most pressing issues in the Indian financial sector.

- It will identify challenges in the Indian financial system by building applied research and extensive stakeholder consultation.

Frictionless Credit

- Currently, data needed for credit appraisal are available with different entities such as central and State governments, banks, credit information companies, etc.

- This has created hindrance in the frictionless delivery of loans.

- The Public Tech Platform would enable delivery of frictionless credit by facilitating seamless flow of required digital information to lenders.

- The platform would be rolled out as a pilot project in August 2023 in a calibrated fashion and it would bring about efficiency in the lending process.

FLASH FLOODS

The recent flash floods in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, resulted in loss of lives and extensive damage.

The Assam Tribune — Date 17 Aug 2023

Shimla flash floods

Climate change and unplanned development coupled with rampant deforestation can at times turn out to be a lethal mix in triggering natural disasters. That's what had unfolded in Himachal Pradesh. Over 60 people have lost their lives so far this week due to landslides and flash floods in Himachal Pradesh. The state which is a popular tourist destination has been battered by heavy rains since last week. Over 800 people have been rescued from the low-lying areas and evacuation efforts are on. The state capital Shimla also received the highest rain in August in 117 years. The torrential downpours have washed away vehicles, demolished buildings and destroyed bridges in the hill state throwing normal life out of gear. Thousands of people have been stranded as key roads have been damaged and power lines and communication networks disrupted. The impact of the devastation caused by the heavy rains becomes evident as railway lines were seen dangling in midair after the ground beneath them was washed away. This year the monsoon has left behind a trail of death and destruction. The state has registered a total of 170 cloudbursts and landslides damaging nearly 9,600 houses. With the frequency of cloudbursts increasing, so have landslides. The maximum impact was seen near the infrastructure sites which disturb the hills. Among the hardest hit districts are Solan, Shimla, Mandi, Hamirpur and Kangra.

About Flash Flood

- Flash Floods are highly localized events of short duration with a very high peak and usually have less than six hours between the occurrence of the rainfall and peak flood.

- The flood situation worsens in the presence of choked drainage lines or encroachments obstructing the natural flow of water.

- Flash floods have a different character than river floods, notably short time scales and occurring in small spatial scales, which make forecasting of flash floods quite a different challenge than traditional flood forecasting approaches.

Causes of the Flash Floods:

Anthropogenic (Human-Induced) Causes:

Unplanned Development:

The rapid and unplanned urbanization, particularly in popular tourist destinations like Shimla, result in extensive land cover changes.

Deforestation:

Forests act as natural sponges, absorbing rainfall and reducing runoff. Deforestation decreases this capacity, leading to increased surface runoff and soil erosion.

Urbanization:

Urban expansion and infrastructure development can lead to localized flooding and an increased likelihood of flash floods during heavy rainfall.

Land Degradation:

Activities such as mining, quarrying, and construction can lead to land degradation, which reduces the soil's ability to absorb water.

Illegal Construction and Dumping:

Unauthorized construction, dumping of waste, and debris in water bodies and waterways reduce their carrying capacity.

This increases the risk of water overflow and exacerbates flooding during heavy rain.

Natural Causes

Role of Climate Change:

Climate change is identified as a factor contributing to the devastation in Himachal Pradesh, causing higher rainfall in shorter spans of time.

Measures Suggested

Sustainable Urban Planning:

Enforce urban planning regulations that prioritize proper drainage, green spaces, and water retention areas, reducing impervious surfaces and enhancing water management.

Reforestation and A forestation:

Promote restoring ecosystems through reforestation and afforestation to slow water runoff, stabilize soil, and decrease flood and landslide risks.

Drainage Infrastructure:

Design and maintain effective drainage systems for increased rainfall resilience, including stormwater management and upkeep of existing networks.

Controlled Development:

Implement sustainable development practices that consider environmental

impacts, ensuring construction doesn't disrupt natural drainage patterns.

Regulation Enforcement:

Enforce regulations against illegal construction, dumping, and mining that contribute to land degradation and disrupt water flow.

MAYA OS

Defence Ministry to switch to locally built OS Maya amid threats.

The initiative

- The Defence Cyber Agency conducted cyber security drills, which included the participation of various branches of national security.

- Its focus was to evaluate the effectiveness of the firewalls in service to safeguard the country's vital infrastructure.

- In the face of increasing cyber and malware attacks on defence as well as critical infrastructure across the country, the Defence Ministry has decided to replace the Microsoft Operating System (OS).

Maya OS

- The Microsoft Operating System (OS) in all computers connected to the Internet will be replaced with a new OS, Maya.

- Indian Navy has decided to install Maya OS in their systems while the Army and the Air Force are evaluating it.

- Maya is based on open-source Ubuntu that is developed locally.

- Maya has the interface and all functionality like Windows and users will not feel much difference as they transition to it.

- Maya was developed by government development agencies and it would prevent malware attacks and other cyberattacks.

ANATOMY OF INDIA'S GROWTH

In 2022, India became the 5th largest economy in the world & will soon become the third-largest economy.

India's way towards third-Largest economy

The data sourced from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) show that India is indeed forecast to become the third-largest economy by 2027.

Despite India's economy not growing as fast as it would like to (read 8%-9% per annum), even a more modest growth rate of 6% per annum will be enough for India to overtake Germany and Japan by 2027.

Significance of India's Global position:

- India's GDP has grown by 83% between 2014 and 2023.

- This is just a shade lower than the 84% increase achieved by China during this period. The US GDP increased by 54%.

- However, barring these three countries,

all the other top 10 countries have seen their GDP stagnate or even contract.

- Of the five countries that India overtook in the 9 years since 2014, the UK's total GDP has grown by a total of 3%, France's by 2%, Russia's by 1%.

- Italy's GDP has not grown at all while Brazil's GDP has contracted by 15%.

Country	2004	2014	2023	2027*	2014 Rank	2027 Rank*
US	12,217	17,551	26,855	31,092	1	1
China	1,949	10,524	19,374	25,722	2	2
India	722	2,039	3,737	5,153	10	3
Japan	4,893	4,897	4,410	5,077	3	4
Germany	2,813	3,890	4,309	4,947	4	5
UK	2,424	3,067	3,159	4,016	5	6
France	2,119	2,857	2,923	3,322	6	7
Brazil	669	2,456	2,081	2,588	7	8
Canada	1,026	1,806	2,090	2,492	11	9
Italy	1,806	2,163	2,170	2,407	8	10
Russia	633	2,049	2,063	2,235	9	11

*IMF Forecast   Source: IMF, 2023

GLOBAL MARITIME INDIA SUMMIT 2023(GIMS 2023)

Recently, a roadshow was organized in Visakhapatnam as a run-up to the Global Maritime India Summit 2023(GIMS 2023).

About Global Maritime India Summit 2023 (GIMS 2023):-

1. Ministry: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

2. Venue: Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

3. Organizers: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Indian Port Association, and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

4. IPA: constituted in 1966 under the Societies Registration Act, primarily with the idea of fostering the growth and development of all Major Ports.

5. FICCI: is the largest and oldest apex business organization in India.

It is an annual meeting of the Indian and international maritime community.

About Global Maritime India Summit 2023 (GIMS 2023):-

Objective:

1. To serve as a platform to showcase global best practices, foster investment partnerships, and chart a new and bright course for our collective future

2. It is a flagship event aimed at propelling the Indian maritime economy by promoting global and regional partnerships and facilitating investments.

3. It addresses key industry issues and

exchanges ideas to bring the sector forward.

4. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) is the exclusive industry partner.

5. It brings together global maritime players, policymakers and regulators, key opinion leaders, and industry leaders through a series of engaging dialogues, forums, and knowledge exchange platforms.

The event includes:-

Investor summit and International exhibition: To facilitate interaction and collaboration among the Indian and international maritime companies, policymakers, investors, and other stakeholders.

Global CEOs' Forum:

To encourage dialogue and cooperation among key industry leaders.

Maritime Excellence Achievers' ceremony:

To recognize partners that has made outstanding contributions to India's development as a leading maritime centre.

INDIA TO CELEBRATE AUGUST 23 AS 'NATIONAL SPACE DAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 26 announced to celebrate August 23, when India's Chandrayaan-3 landed on the Moon, as National Space Day.

About

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 26 announced to celebrate August 23, when India's Chandrayaan-3 landed on the Moon, as National Space Day.

He also announced that the spot where the lander landed on the Moon will be known as 'Shivashakti' and where Chandrayaan-2 touched down will be called as 'Tiranga Point'.

MERA BILL MERA ADHIKAAR

The Government of India, in association with State Governments, is launching an 'Invoice incentive Scheme' by the name 'Mera Bill Mera Adhikaar'.

About

1. The Scheme will be launched on 1st September, 2023.

2. This scheme will initially be launched as a pilot in the States of Assam, Gujarat & Haryana and UTs of Puducherry, Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.

3. All B2C invoices issued by GST registered suppliers to consumers will be eligible for the scheme. All residents of India will be eligible to participate in this Scheme irrespective of their State/UT.

4. Invoices can be uploaded on Mobile Application 'Mera Bill Mera Adhikaar' available on IOS and Android as well as on web portal 'web.merabill.gst.gov.in'.

5. Minimum value for invoices to be considered for a lucky draw has been kept at Rs. 200.

6. Maximum 25 invoices can be uploaded by an individual on App/web portal in a month to be considered for lucky draw.

7. For each uploaded invoice an Acknowledgement Reference Number (ARN) will be generated which will be used for the draw of prizes.

8. Winning invoices will be picked by a method of random draw at regular intervals (monthly/quarterly).

This Pilot Scheme will run for a period of 12 months.

Objective:

To encourage the culture of customers asking for invoices/bills for all purchases.

Aim:

To bring a cultural and behavioural change in the general public to 'Ask for a Bill' as their right and entitlement.

NEAR VS FAR SIDES OF THE MOON

The Vikram lander of Chandrayaan-3 landed on the near side of the moon.

What is the near side of the moon?

- The near side refers to the portion of the moon (about 60%) that is visible to us.

- It is always the same side that is visible from Earth because the moon takes the same time to rotate about its axis as it does to circle around the Earth.

- However this doesn't imply that half the moon is in perpetual darkness.

Far side of the moon

- The 'dark side' is always faced away from the Earth. Thus it is dark only in the sense that it is mysterious and its various topographical features are hidden.

- The 'new moon' or when the moon is invisible from Earth is the time when the other 'far side' of the moon is bathed in sunlight and continues to receive light for nearly a fortnight.

- Soviet spacecraft Luna 3 in 1959 photographed it and the Soviet Academy of Sciences released an atlas of these images.

- Astronauts aboard the Apollo 8 mission of 1968 were the first humans to see the far side of the moon.
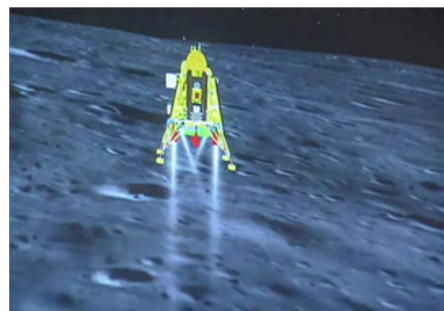
GS - V

RAY OF HOPE FOR UNEMPLOYED BAMBOO ARTISANS

Essence

The article highlights how the Baredala Hasta Silpa Cooperative Society has provided employment to unemployed youths by making bamboo baskets. With a ban on plastic, demand grew, employing more artisans. The cooperative collaborated with NECBDC for workshops, training 800 artisans and promoting sustainable livelihoods.

Background

- When the government implemented a ban on single-use plastic products, the demand for bamboo baskets increased significantly.

- This was because bamboo baskets became eco-friendly alternative to plastic baskets.

- The demand from hatchery companies for bamboo baskets grew, leading to the increase in the number of employed artisans.

- The Baredala Hasta Silpa Cooperative Society Limited is located under the Singarpara gaon panchayat of Bihdia Jajikona development block.

- This cooperative society is playing a crucial role in creating employment opportunities for local youths.

TEA BOARD

Essence of the editorial

The editorial discusses a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) about the Tea Board's shortcomings and failures at a time when the tea industry is facing challenges due to low prices and increasing input costs. The report serves as a wake-up call for the Tea Board.

Tea Board:

1. The Tea Board of India was established in 1954 under the Tea Act, 1953.

2. Its primary responsibility is to oversee the development of the tea industry in India.

3. It operates under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Challenges Faced by the Tea Industry:

Climate challenges and uncertainties.

Decreased demand in both international and domestic markets.

Oversupply of tea in the global market.
Poor quality of tea.

Changing consumer preferences.

Trade disruptions due to maximum residue levels (MRLs).
Low prices of tea leaves affecting small

growers.

Recently the skill initiative "Transforming Lives,

TRANSFORMING LIVES, BUILDING FUTURES: SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NORTH-EAST

Building Futures: Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in the North-East" was launched.

About

- The initiative was launched with financial allocation of Rs360 crore to benefit the 2.5 lakh youth.

- It will create a robust, skill-centric and industry ready ecosystem in the North-Eastern Region (NER).

- The Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in North-East initiative lays emphasis on alignment of courses with National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) bolstered by a digital infrastructure to develop well-rounded professionals.

Key Features of the initiative

1. 2 Lakh skills training under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).

2. 30,000 Apprenticeship Engagements under National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS).

3. 20,000 to be skilled under Jan Shikshan Sansthans (JSS).

4. Quality enhancement of ITIs under skill strengthening for industrial value enhancement (STRIVE).

5. Strengthening of Polytechnics.

6. Special projects will be taken up for the special needs of the North-East region under SANKALP.

7. Skill India International Centre to be set up to promote overseas job opportunities.

ORUNODOI AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Essence of the editorial

The editorial reflects on how the evolution of society is intertwined with human thought. It emphasizes the modern Indian society's pursuit of novelty, which has led to increased awareness and the active involvement of women. Central to the editorial is the Orunodoi scheme, aimed at supporting marginalized groups like housewives, widows, and the physically challenged.

Historical Perspective:

Ancient Indian civilization (Bharat) revered women with dignity and respect. Women were seen as strong, wise, and symbolized by the term 'janani' (mother). Notable historical figures like Gargi, Draupadi, Sita, and Maitreyi were respected.

Contemporary Scenario:

1. The role of women in modern Indian society has transformed.

2. Evolution of society is influenced by the evolution of human thought.

3. Modern Indian society is characterized by a quest for novelty and change.

4. Women are actively participating in this societal evolution.

The Orunodoi Scheme:

Introduction of the Orunodoi scheme to support marginalized groups:

1. Housewives, widows, physically challenged individuals, unmarried women, and the third gender.

2. Financial support provided to enhance economic self-reliance and eradicate poverty.

3. beneficiaries will get Rs 1,250 per month

Impact:

1. Alleviating Poverty: The scheme provides direct financial assistance to marginalized groups, helping them meet essential needs and reduce poverty

2. Empowering Vulnerable Groups: By offering economic support, the scheme empowers beneficiaries to have greater financial stability and participate in economic activities.

3. Pandemic Relief: The scheme proved crucial during the pandemic, offering financial aid to those facing economic challenges due to job losses and increased expenses.

4. Cultural Recognition: Orunodoi acknowledges the significance of cultural ceremonies, offering financial aid for religious gatherings and events, particularly vital in rural areas.

5. Women's Empowerment: The scheme targets women, recognizing their unpaid household work, and enhances their economic and social status.

7. Financial Inclusion: Orunodoi encourages beneficiaries to have bank accounts, fostering financial inclusion and literacy.

Way Ahead

1. Women's empowerment is vital for the present and future.

2. Schemes like Orunodoi Acknowledges Assam's efforts and pledges to provide a secure and empowered future.

3. Investing in women's empowerment crucial for gender equality, poverty alleviation, and inclusive economic growth.

HANDLOOM SECTOR: THE WAY AHEAD

Essence of the editorial

The editorial highlights the significance of the handloom sector in India's economy and culture. The NHDP is designed to support and uplift handloom weavers by addressing their needs and challenges, promoting their products, and providing avenues for growth and development.

About:

1. National Handloom Day is celebrated in India on August 7 every year.

2. It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015 at Chennai to create awareness about India's handloom industry.

3. It commemorates the Swadeshi Movement launched on 7th August 1905, which
advocated indigenous industries and promoted self-reliance.

Importance of Handloom Sector:

1. The handloom sector is one of the largest unorganized economic activities in India.

2. It engages over 35 lakh people, with more than 25 lakh female weavers and allied workers, empowering women economically.

3. Handloom weaving is a vibrant aspect of Indian cultural heritage.

4. Handloom products are in high demand both in international and domestic markets due to their uniqueness, exclusivity of designs, and eco-friendly nature.

Challenges Faced by Handloom Weavers:

1. Handloom weavers, being unorganized, face difficulties in fulfilling large orders with stringent quality and timely delivery requirements.

2. There is a need for infrastructure development, skill upgradation, and design and product development to ensure a steady market and better remuneration for weavers.

Competition from Power loom and Machine-made Products:

The handloom sector faces tough

competition from power loom and machine-made fabrics, which are often cheaper and produced in larger quantities.


National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP):

1. The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, has been promoting the handloom sector through various policies and programs.

2. The NHDP is a Central sector initiative aimed at integrated and holistic development of handlooms and welfare of handloom weavers.

3. It focuses on various aspects like cluster development, marketing assistance, infrastructure projects, credit schemes, research, training, and education for weavers and their wards.

Objectives of NHDP Schemes:

1. Enhance productivity of weavers through ergonomic loom designs and technical support.

2. Provide equal marketing opportunities to handloom workers domestically and internationally.

3. Develop pockets at the intersection of handlooms and handicrafts, revive languishing crafts, and explore export potential.
4. Capacity building of handloom workers in

technical, managerial, entrepreneurship, and digital literacy skills.Preserve traditional designs and weaving techniques.

PALM OIL CULTIVATION MISSION LAUNCHED IN LAKHIMPUR
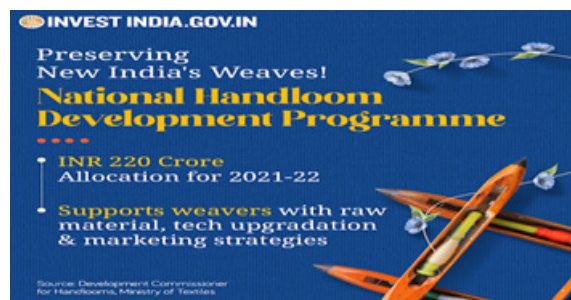
The National Mission on Edible Oil – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) was launched in Lakhimpur through plantation of seedlings at Bogeenadi.

About:

1. The mission aims to promote palm oil cultivation in the region and has identified 20,000 hectares of agricultural land for this purpose over the next five years.

2. The government has selected experienced palm oil companies to implement the scheme, with 3F Oil Palm Agrotech Pvt Ltd responsible for Lakhimpur district.

Partnership with 3F Oil Palm Agrotech Pvt Ltd

1. The Hyderabad-based 3F Oil Palm Agrotech Pvt Ltd has been chosen as the scheme implementation partner for Lakhimpur district.

2. They are responsible for developing palm oil plantations and processing facilities in sub-zone 1-b and V-a, which include Lakhimpur and Chirang districts.

Significance of the NMEO-OP Initiative:

1. Economic Growth:

The cultivation of palm oil has the potential to contribute significantly to the economic growth of the region. It can create job opportunities in the agriculture and processing sectors, generating income for local communities.

2. Diversification of Agriculture:

Introducing a new crop like palm oil diversifies the agricultural landscape of the region. This reduces the dependence on traditional crops and opens up new avenues for income generation.

3. Reduced Import Dependency:

India is one of the largest importers of palm oil in the world. By promoting domestic production, the initiative aims to reduce import dependency, leading to savings in foreign exchange and increased self-sufficiency. Palm oil is a widely used edible oil in various food products. By increasing domestic production, the initiative can enhance food security and stabilize edible oil prices in the region.

Food Security:

Concerns

1. Environmental Concerns:

The expansion of palm oil plantations has been associated with deforestation, habitat destruction, and loss of biodiversity in some regions. Proper environmental impact assessments and sustainable practices are essential to mitigate these concerns.

Water Usage: Palm oil cultivation requires significant water resources, which may put strain on existing water sources and impact local water availability.

2. Lack of Local Expertise:

As palm oil is a relatively new crop in the region, farmers may lack the necessary expertise and knowledge to cultivate it effectively. Proper training and support are crucial for successful implementation.

LIVELIHOOD PROJECT UNDER PM-DEVINE A BOON FOR NE

Essence of the Editorial

The editorial highlights the PM-DevINE scheme, aimed at developing the Northeast through infrastructure and social projects. It includes a project focusing on utilizing banana pseudo stems for value-added products, generating livelihoods and rural employment.

Development Initiatives for the Northeast Region (PM-DevINE)

• The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved a new scheme called PM's Development Initiatives for the Northeast Region (PM-DevINE) for four years under the 15th Finance Commission from 2022-23 to 2025-26.

The scheme is 100% centrally funded and will be implemented by the Ministry of Development of Northeast Region (DoNER).

• The scheme aims at rapid and holistic development of the Northeast by funding infrastructure and social development projects based on the actual requirements of the respective states.

The objectives of the PM-DevINE scheme are:

Funding infrastructure projects in line with the PM Gati Shakti initiative.

Supporting social development projects based on the specific needs of the Northeast.

Enabling livelihood activities for youth and women.

Filling the development gaps in various sectors.

STATE CABINET DECIDES TO CREATE 81 SUB-DISTRICTS

• In a significant administrative reform, the Himanta Biswa Sarma Government on Friday abolished the 24 civil subdivisions in the State and decided to create 81 sub-districts.

• About Administrative Reform and Creation of Sub-Districts:

• The Himanta Biswa Sarma Government announced a significant administrative reform.

• The 24 civil subdivisions in the state were abolished.

• Instead, the government decided to create 81 sub-districts.

• These sub-districts will be headed by an ADC (Assistant Deputy Commissioner).

- Most powers of the District Commissioner will be delegated to the ADC.

- The sub-districts will house offices of relevant departments.

- This new system will be implemented starting from January 1, 2024.

The goal is to have a more decentralized administrative structure, where sub-districts handle local matters while the DC focuses on broader issues.

Recreation of Merged Districts:

The State Cabinet decided to recreate four districts that were merged with others earlier, anticipating a delimitation exercise.
The re-created districts are Hojai, Tamulpur, Bajali, and Biswanath.

District Composition and Boundaries:

- The new Hojai district will include Hojai, Lumding, and Binnakandi constituencies.

- Tamulpur and Goreswar will form the Tamulpur district.

- Bajali and Bhawanipur-Sorbhog will compose the Bajali district.

- Biswanth, Gohpur, and Behali will be part of the new Biswanath district.

The geographical boundaries of these new districts are based on the delimitation exercise, considering the new constituency boundaries.

Important for Prelims

KURIL ISLANDS

The Ukraine war has given some hope to Japanese that the Kuril Islands can be wrestled out of Russia's control.

About

The Kuril Islands are strategically located islands stretching between the north of Japan's Hokkaido Island and the southern tip of Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. These are a set of 4 islands situated between the Sea of Okhotsk and the North Pacific Ocean.

They are - Iturup (Etorofu in Japanese), Kunashir (Kunashiri), Shikotan and Habomai Islets. These islands are a point of Contention between Russia and

Japan:

Japan claims - The islands have been part of it since the early 19th century.

Russia: These islands were seized by Soviet forces in the closing days of WWII.
Japan, Russia and South Korea call them in 3 different names.

Japan - Northern territories
Russia - the Kuril Islands
South Korea - Dokdo islands

RAJMARG YATRA

The NHAI has introduced 'Rajmargyatra,' a comprehensive mobile application designed for the convenience of national highway users.

About

- NHAI launched 'Rajmargyatra' app for national highway users.

- Aims to enhance user experience with highway info.

- Available on Google Play Store and iOS App Store.

- User-friendly interface in Hindi and English.

- Efficient complaint resolution system.

- Focuses on safer and enjoyable highway travel.

Key Features
Comprehensive Highway

Information
Hassle-Free Complaint Redressal
Seamless FASTag Services
Over-speeding Notifications and
Voice-Assistance

HIMALAYAN VULTURE

Researchers have achieved the first-ever instance of captive breeding of the Himalayan vulture (Gyps himalayensis) in India at the Assam State Zoo, Guwahati.

Conservation of Himalayan Vulture

The ground-breaking captive breeding of the Himalayan Vulture was recorded on 14th March, 2022, at the Assam State Zoo, making a significant achievement for wildlife preservation.

These Vultures, which are native to the high Himalayas, were rescued from various poisoning and accident incidents in 2011-2012.

The successful breeding comes as a dedicated effort to create a suitable environment for the birds and acclimate them to the tropical conditions of the zoo.

SUPERNOVA

The James Webb Space Telescope has captured new imagery of supernova remnant Cassiopeia A.

What is Supernova?

A supernova is a powerful stellar explosion that marks the end of a star's life cycle.

It's one of the universe's most energetic events, releasing immense energy, radiation and elements.

Types of Supernova:

Core-Collapse Supernova: Massive stars collapse due to fuel depletion, triggering an explosive release of energy.

Thermal Runaway Supernova: Collision of stars, even white dwarfs, leads to a runaway reaction and powerful explosion. Shaligrams, worshipped by Hindus and Buddhists for over 2,000 years, are becoming rarer because of climate change.

SHALIGRAMS

About

1. For more than 2,000 years, Hinduism, Buddhism and the shamanic Himalayan religion of Bon have venerated Shaligrams.

2. They are ancient fossils of ammonites, a class of extinct sea creatures related to modern squids.

3. Originating from a single remote region in northern Nepal in the Kali Gandaki River Valley of Mustang.

4. Shaligram stones are viewed primarily as manifestations of the Hindu god Vishnu.

5. Because they are not human-made, but created by the landscape, they are believed to have an intrinsic consciousness of their own.

6. As a result, Shaligrams are kept in homes and in temples, where they are treated as both
living gods and active community members.

7. Climate change and Shaligrams Climate change, faster glacial melting, and gravel mining in the Kali Gandaki are changing the course of the river, which means fewer Shaligrams are appearing each year.

8. This is mainly because the Kali Gandaki is fed by meltwater from the Southern Tibetan Plateau.

9. However, with the glacier disappearing, the river is becoming smaller and shifting away from the fossil beds that contain the ammonites needed to become Shaligrams. Scientists from the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) recently observed a clouded leopard in western Assam's Manas National Park.

CLOUDED LEOPARDS

About Clouded Leopard

• Clouded leopard (Neofelis nebulosa) is a wild cat inhabiting forest habitat.

• It has large, dexterous paws with specialized footpads for gripping branches. Specialized ankle bones allow varied positions for climbing, including climbing headfirst down trees.

• Another distinctive feature is its long canine teeth, resembling Ice Age saber tooth tigers. These canines are longer in proportion to skull size than those of any other species of wild cat.

• While more closely related to big cats, the clouded leopard is frequently described as bridging the gap between big and small cats due to its smaller stature.

• It has proportionately short legs and a long tail. The coat is brown or yellowish-gray and covered with irregular dark stripes, spots and blotches.

Conservation Status: Vulnerable

The clouded leopard is categorised into two species:

the Mainland clouded leopard distributed from central Nepal, Bangladesh, and Assam (eastern India) to peninsular Malaysia, and the Sunda clouded leopard (Neofelis diardi) native to Borneo and Sumatra.

Globally, 9th August is celebrated as International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

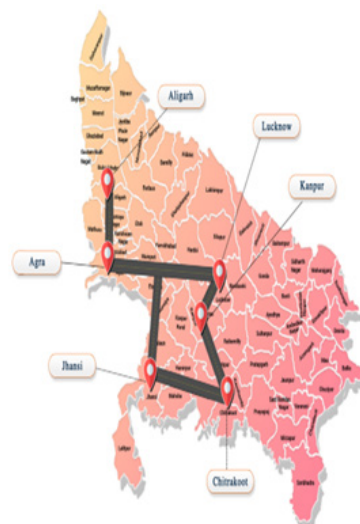# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

About

Globally celebrated on August 9, the day commemorates the first session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1982.

This year's theme: "Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-determination."

UPDIC PROJECT

- The Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC) is a transformative initiative led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

- Originating from an investors' summit in 2018, UPDIC aims to establish Uttar Pradesh as a global hub for defence and aerospace manufacturing.

Objectives & Features:

- Empower India in defence and aerospace.
- 6 strategic nodes: Agra, Aligarh, Lucknow, Kanpur, Chitrakoot, Jhansi.
- Infrastructure, technology, agriculture focus.
- Connects western, central, Bundelkhand regions.
- 6 expressways, 16 domestic, 5 international airports.

SUSWAGATAM PORTAL

Chief Justice Chandrachud announced the launch of the "Suswagatam" portal.

Suswagatam Portal:

- It's a web-based and mobile-friendly application.

- Allows online registration for various users, including advocates, visitors, and interns.

- Facilitates obtaining e-passes to enter the Supreme Court premises.

Supreme Court Launches 'SuSwagatam' Portal for Seamless Entry and Paperless Access

INDIAN FLYING FOX BAT

A new study found that India's largest species of bats, Indian Flying Fox bat spends 7% of its day-roosting time being environmentally vigilant.

About Indian Flying Fox bat:

1. It is a species of flying fox native to the Indian subcontinent. It is one of the largest bats in the world.
2. The nectar and fruit-eating flying fox (Pteropus giganteus) is generally considered vermin as they raid orchards.

3. It is a keystone species causing seed dispersals of many plants in tropical systems.

4. Appearance: The Indian flying fox is so called due to its unique, fox-like appearance: reddish-brown coat, characteristically long snout as well as large eyes. And indeed, this animal resembles a little fox with wings.

5. Distribution: These bats are endemic to South Central Asia, found from Pakistan and China to the Maldives Islands.

Habits and Lifestyle:

1. It is highly social creatures, forming large roosts of several hundred animals.

2. These bats live in a 'vertical', male-dominated hierarchy system, where higher-ranked individuals occupy higher spots of the tree, while lower-ranked individuals remain on lower spots.

3. Diet: They maintain a frugivorous diet, supplementing it with insects as well as flowers, containing juice and nectar.

4. Threat: Being external roosters, the flying fox is exposed to predators and disturbances apart from environmental indicators such as heat and light.

5. Conservation status

6. IUCN: Least concern

7. The Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972: Schedule II

RED SEA

More than 3,000 United States military personnel have arrived in the Red Sea aboard two warships after tanker seizures by Iran.

Red Sea:

1. Red Sea is situated between Africa (Egypt, Sudan, and Eritrea) and the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia and Yemen).

2. It is a part of the Great Rift Valley.

3. The northern portion of the Red Sea is bifurcated by the Sinai Peninsula into the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez, where it is connected to the Mediterranean Sea via the famous Suez Canal.

4. The Red Sea is linked with the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea by the straits of Babel Mandeb.

5. The Red Sea contains some of the world's hottest and saltiest seawater.

6. With its connection to the Mediterranean Sea via the Suez Canal, it is one of the most heavily traveled waterways in the world, carrying maritime traffic between Europe and Asia.

7. Its name is derived from the colour changes observed in its waters. Normally, the Red Sea is an intense blue-green.

8. Sometimes it is populated by extensive blooms of the algae Trichodesmium erythraeum, turn the sea a reddish brown color.

PM-EBUS SEWA

The Cabinet has recently approved a bus scheme "PM-eBus Sewa".

About

The scheme is about introducing around 10,000 electric buses under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in 169 cities across the nation.

The scheme will promote e-mobility and provide full support for behind-the-meter power infrastructure.

The scheme was first announced in 2021 in the Union budget.

PM-eBus Sewa

1. Coverage - The scheme will cover cities having a population of 3 lakh and above according to Census 2011.

2. Under this scheme priority will be given to cities having no organized bus service.

3. Duration - The Scheme will support bus operations for 10 years.

4. Ministry - Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

5. The Scheme has 2 segments

Segment A – Augmenting the City bus services - (169 cities)

Segment B – Green Urban Mobility Initiatives (GUMI) - (181 cities).

6. Funding - Estimated cost of the scheme is Rs 57,613 crore, of which Rs 20,000 crore will be provided by Central government and the rest will be provided by state governments.

7. Operation - States/Cities shall be responsible for running the bus services and making payments to the bus operators.

INS 'VINDHYAGIRI'

President Droupadi Murmu launched INS Vindhyagiri, a Nilgiri-class Frigate.

About

INS Vindhyagiri has been constructed under Project 17A (Alpha) and is built by the Indian Navy at Kolkata-based Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE).

INS Vindhyagiri is the sixth ship of the Project 17A program.

Project 17A

1. Project 17 Alpha frigates (P-17A) were launched by the Indian Navy in 2019 to construct a series of stealth guided-missile frigates.

2. These are currently being constructed by two companies - Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders (MDL) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE).

3. These guided-missile frigates have been constructed with a specific stealth design, which has radar-absorbent coatings and is low-observable which can make its approach undetectable for the enemies.

4. The new technology also reduces the infrared signals of the ship.

5. The first stealth ship launched under Project 17A was the Nilgiri, which was launched in 2019.

FLOOD WATCH APPLICATION

India launches Flood Watch app for real-time flood updates.

About

CWC – The Central Water Commission (CWC) launched an app, called Flood watch, which can forecast the chances of floods a day in advance.

It also provides a 7 day advisory on the

chances of floods at various stations in the country where the CWC maintains its measurement gauges.

The app has a map of India with coloured circles at water stations across the country indicating the current risk of flooding.

Colour Coding – A 'green' circle indicates 'normal'; yellow, above normal; orange, 'severe' and red, 'extreme'.

Clicking on a circle shows the current water level at the station, the highest level historically attained, the danger level and warning level.

The warnings are in English or Hindi with an option for a voice-enabled prompt.
The app will also provide State-wise/basin-wide flood forecast up to 24 hours or flood advisory, up to 7 days, that can be accessed via selecting specific stations.

INDIA'S FIRST 3D PRINTED POST OFFICE

India's first 3D-printed post office is situated in Bengaluru's Cambridge Layout. Union Minister for Railways, Communications, Electronics, and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw, virtually inaugurated it from the General Post Office building.

Construction and Technology:

1. Done by L&T with IIT Madras assistance, using 3D concrete printing technology.

2. Completed in 43 days, ahead of schedule.

3. Robotic printer deposited layers of concrete based on design, with quick-hardening, strong bonding concrete.

Cost and Efficiency:

1. Built at Rs 23 lakh, 30-40% cheaper than conventional methods.

2. IIT Madras and L&T collaborated, with guidance from Prof Ravindra Gettu.

3. Indigenous robotic tech hints at scalability; concrete material has important properties

3D Printing

3D printing, also known as additive manufacturing, is a process of creating three-dimensional objects from a digital model by adding material layer by layer.

SULINA CHANNEL

Recently, the Sulina Channel has provided Ukraine with an alternative trade route for its grain after Russia withdrew from the Black Sea grain deal.
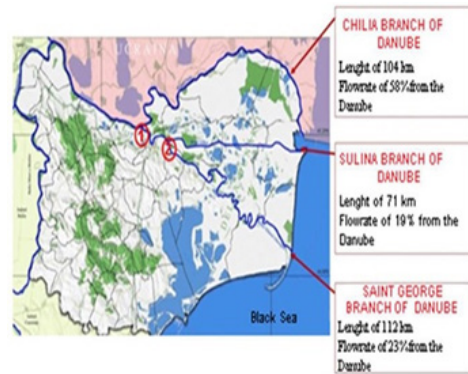
Background:-

• Russia, targeted ports and grain storage facilities along the Danube River in Ukraine in overnight drone strikes on August 16, 2023.

• Russia also withdrew from the Black Sea grain deal in July 2023.

• Amidst this, the Danube Delta has provided Ukraine with an alternative passage in the form of the Sulina Channel to help secure its grain requirements.

About Sulina Channel:-

• Location Southeastern part of Romania.

• Length: approximately 64 km long.

• It connects the Danube River, with the Black Sea.

• It provides a direct route for maritime transportation.

Significance:-

• It is a significant watercourse for shipping and navigation.

• It is a vital trade route for cargo vessels, commercial ships, and other maritime traffic entering or leaving the Black Sea region.

• Ukrainian grain ships sail from ports like Izmail and Reni on the Chilia Channel to Sulina.

CHILIA BRANCH OF DANUBE
Lenght of 104 km
Flowrate of 58% from the Danube

SULINA BRANCH OF DANUBE
Lenght of 71 km
Flowrate of 19% from the Danube

SAINT GEORGE BRANCH OF DANUBE
Lenght of 112 km
Flowrate of 23% from the Danube

ASTRA AIR-TO-AIR MISSILE

The Light Combat Aircraft(LCA) Tejas successfully test-fired an ASTRA beyond visual range (BVR) air-to-air missile off the coast of Goa.

About ASTRA MISSILE

The ASTRA BVR missile is designed to engage and destroy highly maneuvering supersonic aerial targets. It has a range of over 100 kilometers.

BVR missiles are capable of engaging beyond the range of 20 nautical miles or 37 kilometres.

It is jointly designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Research Centre Imarat (RCI) and other laboratories of DRDO.

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