



Factly Compilation

14th to 19th August, 2023

Factly Compilation for the Month of August (Third Week) 2023

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1. Lok Sabha suspends Congress's Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury: How Privileges Committee works

Source: The post is based on the article “**Lok Sabha suspends Congress's Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury: How Privileges Committee works**” published in **Indian Express on 13th August 2023**.

What is the News?

Lok Sabha has moved a motion to refer the gross, deliberate and repeated misconduct of an MP to the Privileges Committee for further examination.

What are Parliamentary Privileges?

Parliament and its Members (MPs) have certain rights and immunities that enable them to function effectively in their legislative roles. These are called parliamentary privileges.

When the Constitution was enacted, it provided that the Parliamentary privileges would be defined by a law made by our Parliament. Until that law is made, the rights would be the same as those of the House of Commons in the UK.

In 1978, our Parliament removed the reference to the UK's House of Commons by a constitutional amendment. But, so far, our Parliament hasn't made a law to specify parliamentary privileges.

Therefore, currently parliamentary privileges are a mix of provisions in the Constitution, statutes, House procedures and conventions.

For example, the Constitution specifies that MPs have freedom of speech and immunity from judicial proceedings against anything they say or votes they cast in Parliament.

The Code of Civil Procedure also protects MPs from arrest and detention under civil cases during a parliamentary session, and for a specified period before it begins and after it ends.

How does Parliament act on breach of privilege?

Each House of Parliament is the guardian of its privileges. Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha have the authority to take suitable action against anyone who breaches the privileges of its members or commits contempt of the House.

There are two mechanisms by which Parliament takes up these matters:

First, a member can raise the issue in the House, and the House decides on it. Usually, the matter is sent to a Privileges Committee for a thorough look. The committee recommends to the House a course of action which is then accepted by it.

Second is MPs can bring matters of breach of privilege to the notice of the presiding officers of their respective Houses. The presiding officers can then decide whether or not to send the case to the committee of privileges.

What does the committee decide in breach of privilege cases against MPs?

The Committee of Privileges has the power to recommend to the House for its consideration the issuance of admonitions, reprimands, suspension and, in rare cases, expulsion from the House.

The convention followed by the committee of both Houses is that if the MP against whom a privilege matter is raised gives an unqualified apology, then the issue is allowed to rest, and it recommends no further action.

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2. Bunch of new Placenta in chip devices can help making pregnancies safe

Source: The post is based on the article “**Bunch of new Placenta in chip devices can help making pregnancies safe**” published in **Department of Science and Technology’s website**.

What is the News?

Researchers have developed a device called placenta-on-a-chip (POC). This device mimics the placenta at various stages of pregnancy.

What is Placenta?

The placenta is an organ that develops in the uterus during pregnancy. It performs duties for most of the foetus’s organs while they are still forming, such as providing oxygen while the lungs develop and nutrition while the gut is forming.

Placenta shields the baby from harmful drugs and chemicals. But some can still cross this barrier and cause harm to the baby in the womb. Thus, pregnant women are not given most medications and they continue to suffer.

Determining which medicines can be given during pregnancy that would not cross the placenta is a daunting task. Animal studies (mostly on mice) don’t provide definitive answers due to differences between human and mouse placentas.

As a result, the number of medicines declared safe for pregnant women is low and marking new medicines that come into the market as “pregnancy safe” is a challenge.

What have the researchers developed?

Researchers have developed a device called placenta-on-a-chip (POC). This device imitates different stages of pregnancy such as blood flow and cell interactions.

This can help in studying various stages of pregnancy which in turn can help in drug discovery, study of toxicity of chemicals like caffeine and understanding the effects of conditions such as preeclampsia and diabetes mellitus during pregnancy.

3. SC proposes ‘permanent security units’ for all courts

Source: The post is based on the article “**SC proposes ‘permanent security units’ for all courts**” published in **The Hindu on 14th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The Supreme Court has issued several directions to guard court complexes across the country.

These directions were issued due to recent incidents of firing inside court complexes.

What are the directions issued by the Supreme court to guard court complexes?

Security Plan: The Supreme Court has asked the High Courts to prepare “security plans” in consultation with the Principal Home Secretaries, Directors-General of Police and Police Commissioners to protect the courts.

– The security plan may include a proposal for setting up of **permanent court security unit(s)** in each complex.

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– The security plan should indicate the strength and source of manpower for these security units, including armed and unarmed personnel and supervisory officers for each unit, the minimum term and mode of deployment of manpower, their list of duties and additional financial benefits, special modules for training and sensitizing personnel in matters of court security and so on.

CCTV Cameras: The court has also directed the high courts to indicate what steps have been put in place to install CCTV cameras, where they are absent, for security within court premises.

Digitisation of judicial infrastructure: The court has also stressed on the need for digitisation of judicial infrastructure, particularly at the district level.

4. Unique star discovered that challenges previous understanding of star formation processes

Source: The post is based on the article “**Unique star discovered that challenges previous understanding of star formation processes**” published in **Department of Science and Technology’s website**.

What is the News?

Scientists at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA, Bangalore) have discovered a unique star named HE 1005-1439. This star has been classified as a carbon-enhanced metal-poor (CEMP) star.

What are Carbon-enhanced metal-poor (CEMP) Stars?

CEMP Stars are primarily characterized by diverse heavy elements and abundance patterns. They were formed from the ejected material of the first stars that formed after the Big Bang.

These stars are primarily classified into four groups, based on which groups of heavy elements are more abundant. These are mostly dwarf stars, subgiant stars or giant stars.

At the evolutionary stages in which the stars exist, they are not expected to produce heavy elements.

However, the surface chemical composition of these stars exhibit abundances of heavy elements those are about 100 to 1000 times higher than that of the Sun.

What is HE 1005-1439?

HE 1005-1439 is classified as a carbon-enhanced metal-poor (CEMP) star. This star challenges previous ideas about star formation.

This star shows signs of being formed through a combination of two different processes called neutron-capture processes – the slow (s-) process and the intermediate (i-) process.

The iron content of the star is thousand times less than that of the sun and it is heavily enriched with neutron-capture elements.

Significance: This is the first time scientists have come across an object with a surface chemical composition that exhibits contributions from both slow(s) and intermediate (i) neutron-capture nucleosynthesis. The observed abundance pattern is quite unique and has never been observed before in any CEMP stars.

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5. Yelagiri hut shelters 200 years of hill tribe history

Source: The post is based on the article “**Yelagiri hut shelters 200 years of hill tribe history**” published in **The Hindu on 14th August 2023**.

What is the News?

Over 200 years ago, the Malaiyali tribe settled on Yelagiri hill in Tamil Nadu, building clay huts for various purposes.

Today, only one old hut remains as a symbol of their transition from foraging to a more modern lifestyle.

What is Maliyali Tribe?

The Malaiyali tribe — *malai* meaning “hill” and *yali* meaning “people” — is spread across Tamil Nadu’s hilly region.

Unique Lifestyle of Maliyali Tribe:

Red clay played a pivotal role in building huts, burying the dead and sustaining the tribe’s lifecycle from birth to death.

Huts were constructed with red clay on teak wood frames, embodying the tribe’s connection to nature.

The roof of the huts were made of dry bamboo leaves and cow dung, preventing leaks during monsoons.

Despite its deceptively small exterior, the hut accommodates eight people and includes an attic (paran) for storage.

Originally built for living, the hut later served as a seed storage space after harvest.

The hut stands on a stilt-like structure made of teakwood. This holds the house two feet above the ground to keep rodents at bay and to prevent the house from flooding during torrential rain.

There was a dedicated space for the grains. That is how precious agriculture was to them.

Significance of the Lifestyle of Maliyali Tribe: Despite changes over time, the huts remain a significant part of the tribe’s history.

Currently only one hut stands as a testament to their culture. Tourists appreciate this traditional structure, giving them a glimpse of the tribe’s past.

6. Why is India’s Defence Ministry ditching Microsoft Windows for Maya OS?

Source: The post is based on the article “**Why is India’s Defence Ministry ditching Microsoft Windows for Maya OS?**” published in **The Hindu on 12th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The Ministry of Defence has decided to replace the Microsoft Operating System (OS) in all its computers that can connect to the Internet with Maya, an Ubuntu-based OS built locally.

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What is Maya OS?

[Click Here to read](#)

What are the key features of Maya OS?

Maya OS offers a number of features such as cloud storage integration, full disk encryption, digital signature, biometric authentication, and a feature named “**Chakravyuh**”.

Chakaravyuh serves as a robust endpoint solution for anti-malware and antivirus protection. It acts as a safeguarding barrier that shields users from online threats by blocking cybercriminals' attempts of breach.

Why has India shifted to Maya OS?

Cyberthreat: India's critical infrastructure has seen numerous cyberattacks and security breaches in recent years.

– Some of the most notable incidents include the cyberattack on Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) in 2019, the Mumbai Power Grid outage in 2020, the ransomware attacks on Oil India Limited and Spice Jet servers in 2022, and the Goa Flood Monitoring System hack.

– Hence, using an indigenous operating system could not only be a promising step towards securing India's vital computer systems from malicious actors, but also reduce the country's reliance on foreign software and enhance its cyber resilience.

IT Modernisation: This will help in IT modernisation efforts that are underway — like digitizing government services and making them interoperable.

7. DPIIT and Ministry of Rural Development jointly launch 'One District One Product' Wall at SARAS Ajeevika Store

Source: The post is based on the article “**DPIIT and Ministry of Rural Development jointly launch 'One District One Product' Wall at SARAS Ajeevika Store**” published in **PIB on 12th August 2023**.

What is the News?

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade(DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry has collaborated with the Ministry of Rural Development to launch One District One Product (ODOP) Wall.

What is One District One Product (ODOP) Wall?

ODOP Wall is a collaboration between One District One Product (ODOP) initiative and SARAS Ajeevika.

This collaboration aims to drive consumers towards boosting sales and increasing the visibility of SARAS products. This will help in promoting indigenous crafts and artisans of rural SHGs women.

What is SARAS Ajeevika?

SARAS Mela is an initiative by the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission [DAY-NRLM], Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD).

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Aim: To bring the rural women SHG members formed under DAY NRLM under one platform to showcase their skills, sell and build linkages with potential market players at a fair price.

What is One District One Product (ODOP) initiative?

One District One Product(ODOP) is an initiative of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

It is aimed at fostering balanced regional development across all districts of the country. The initiative aims to select, brand, and promote at least One Product from each District (One District – One Product) of the country for enabling holistic socioeconomic growth across all regions.

The ODOP Initiative has identified a total of 1102 products from 761 districts across the country.

8. Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) and Common Service Centre (CSC) launches “Niveshak Sarathi

Source: The post is based on the article “**Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) and Common Service Centre (CSC) launches “Niveshak Sarathi”** published in **PIB on 11th August 2023.**

What is the News?

The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) and Common Service Centre (CSC) have jointly launched “Niveshak Sarathi” Vans in Delhi-NCR as part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations.

What is Niveshak Sarathi?

Niveshak Sarathi initiative aims to enhance financial literacy and awareness about fraudulent schemes.

The vans are equipped with a TV screen showcasing investor awareness movies, a public address system, and informative brochures.

The initiative included sessions conducted by Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) from IEPFA at key locations. Common Service Centre served as the knowledge partner for this campaign.

What is the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority(IEPFA)?

IEPFA was established by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to manage the Investor Education and Protection Fund.

It focuses on refunding shares, unclaimed dividends, matured deposits, and debentures to investors, among other responsibilities.

What are Common Service Centres(CSC)?

[Click Here to read](#)

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9. Metagenome sequencing is transforming pathogen surveillance

Source: The post is based on the article “**Metagenome sequencing is transforming pathogen surveillance**” published in **The Hindu** on **16th August 2023**.

What is the news?

Genome sequencing technologies have been useful in detecting the SARS-CoV-2 as the causative agent of COVID-19 as well as other diseases.

What is Genome Sequencing?

[Click Here to Read](#)

Genome sequencing allows scientists to rapidly and accurately detect pathogens from various sources like wastewater, air, soil, and animals.

What are the different genome sequencing technologies that help in surveillance of COVID-19 and other diseases?

Metagenomics rapidly studies the virus’s genetic information, without prior knowledge of the infectious agent. It helped in the detection of SARS-CoV-2 without going into the time-consuming microbiology route with the samples.

In Nigeria, the technique helped in finding 13 viruses causing illness, discovered human blood-associated dicistrovirus 2, and linked pegivirus C to Lassa fever severity.

CovidSeq assay is another genome sequencing technology developed by scientists.

GISAID is an online repository on which scientists can store the genetic information of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This shows that scientists are using high-throughput genome surveillance activities.

Note: *High throughput refers to sequencing techniques that can process a lot of DNAs simultaneously, even an entire genome all at once.*

What are other areas of application of genome sequencing?

Genome sequencing helped scientists to control the mpox virus and it is now helping with avian influenza surveillance.

Recently, experts have applied genome sequencing to quickly **detect lumpy skin disease in cattle and the rise of drug-resistant tuberculosis**, along with other applications. Similar efforts have been suggested for Zika and dengue.

10. Not Just Moon: Isro’s Aditya-L1, India’s first Solar mission, reaches spaceport

Source: The post is based on the article “**Not Just Moon: Isro’s Aditya-L1, India’s first Solar mission, reaches spaceport**” published in **The Times of India** on **16th August 2023**.

What is the news?

India’s first solar mission, Aditya-L1 is expected to be launched by late August or early September.

About Aditya – L1 Mission

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Read Here: [India's first mission to study the sun and Objectives and importance of ISRO'S Aditya-L1 mission](#)

-It is the first space-based Indian observatory to study the Sun.

-Aditya-L1 will be positioned 1.5 million kilometers away from Earth in a halo orbit around the L1 point. This location offers a significant advantage for observing solar activities and their impact on space weather in real time.

Payloads: The spacecraft carries **seven payloads** for studying the photosphere, chromosphere, and outer layers of the Sun (known as the corona) by using electromagnetic and particle and magnetic field detectors.

-Out of seven payloads, four payloads will directly view the Sun and the remaining three payloads will carry out in-situ studies of particles and fields at L1.

11. [Scientists detect 'microplastics' in human heart for first time: Report](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"Scientists detect 'microplastics' in human heart for first time: Report"** published in **Hindustan Times** on **16th August 2023**.

What is the news?

Scientists at Beijing Anzhen Hospital in China found microplastics in the heart tissues of patients who had heart surgery.

They also found Polyethylene terephthalate, commonly used in clothing and food containers, as well as polyvinyl chloride (PVC), which is commonly used in window frames, drainage pipes, paint, and other applications.

What are the issues with the findings?

Microplastics have been suggested to have an indirect role in conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and chronic liver disease by affecting the gastrointestinal tract.

Hence, the discovery of microplastics in heart tissues is concerning. Further research is needed to understand how these microplastics enter the heart tissues and their long-term impact on health after heart surgery.

What are Microplastics?

[Click Here to Read](#)

President Murmu pays tribute to Matangini Hazra, Kanaklata Barua: Who were these freedom fighters

Source: The post is based on the article **"President Murmu pays tribute to Matangini Hazra, Kanaklata Barua: Who were these freedom fighters"** published in **The Indian Express** on **16th August 2023**.

What is the news?

President Droupadi Murmu, in her speech on the eve of Independence Day, honored two women freedom fighters – Matangini Hazra and Kanaklata Barua.

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Who was Matangini Hazra?

-She was born in 1869 in a village named Hogla, near Tamluk, West Bengal. She was the daughter of a poor farmer. She got married at the age of 12 and became a divorcee at the age of 18. She did not have any children.

-She followed the path of Mahatma Gandhi. Due to her love for Gandhi, she became to be known as **Gandhiburi** (the old Gandhian woman).

-She was arrested at the age of 61 for joining the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 and Gandhi's Salt March. During this period, she became an active member of the Indian National Congress and began spinning khadi, following Gandhi's footsteps.

-She became more deeply engaged in the freedom movement during Gandhi's Quit India Movement in August 1942.

-In September 1942, at 73 years old, Hazra led 6,000 mainly women protestors to take over Tamluk police station from the British. She clashed with the police, got shot three times, and fell, chanting 'Vande Mataram'.

-Due to her sacrifice for the nation, in 1977, the first statue in the Kolkata Maidan was dedicated to Matangini Hazra. Several schools and streets in West Bengal have been named after her.

Who was Kanaklata Barua?

-She belonged to Assam. She was one of the youngest martyrs of the Quit India Movement.

-At the age of 17, she became the leader of a group of freedom fighters known as the "**Mrityu Bahini**". She guided the group to hoist the Tricolour at Gohpur police station on September 20, 1942.

-This led to clashes between the protestors and the police. The police firing took the life of Barua.

-Despite being shot, Barua held onto the flag to prevent it from touching the ground. Mukunda Kakoty, another volunteer, also got shot while trying to support the flag.

-In 2020, the Coast Guard honored her memory by naming a Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) after her, known as the **ICGS Kanaklata Barua**.

12. PM announces new housing scheme for urban poor; low interest rate loans on offer

Source: The post is based on the article "**PM announces new housing scheme for urban poor; low interest rate loans on offer**" published in **The Hindu on 16th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The Prime Minister has said that the government would soon launch a new scheme to help those living in rented houses in cities to build their own homes.

Under this scheme, they will receive relief in interest rates and loans taken from banks to construct their houses.

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What is the existing scheme for housing shortage for urban poor?

Government already has a scheme to address the housing shortage for the urban poor called the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U)**.

PMAY-U was launched in 2015 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

The mission aims to address the urban housing shortage among the economically backward sections, including the slum dwellers by ensuring a *pucca* house to all eligible urban households by 2022.

The scheme period though now has been extended up to December 2024 to complete all the houses sanctioned.

Progress of PMAY-U Scheme: A total of 75.51 lakh houses have been completed out of which 71.39 lakh have been occupied till now under the PMAY-U.

– Uttar Pradesh had the largest number of houses followed by Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.

What are the other schemes announced by the Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister has also announced that the **Vishwakarma scheme** will also be launched soon.

Aim of the scheme: To improve the quality, scale and reach of products and services of artisans and craftspeople and to integrate them with the domestic and global value chain.

– This would result in the economic empowerment of such workers, especially those belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Communities, women, transgender and other weaker sections of the society.

13. Russia's Luna-25 sends back first images from space

Source: The post is based on the article **“Russia's Luna-25 sends back first images from space”** published in **Indian Express on 16th August 2023**.

What is the News?

Russia's Luna-25 spacecraft has successfully captured and transmitted its first images from space.

Even though the Luna-25 was launched weeks after **Chandrayaan-3**, it could land on the Moon two days earlier.

What is the Luna 25 Mission?

Launched by: Russia

Aim: To execute a pinpoint landing near the moon's south pole, a region that has garnered scientific interest due to its potential for revealing critical insights into the moon's geological composition.

Objectives: To collect geological samples which will give scientists the opportunity to study this unexplored region of the moon.

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– To find water or at least its building blocks which could aid in establishing human colonies in the near future.

Significance: Russia's Luna-25 mission is a bid to reclaim some of its prestige back as one of the leaders in space exploration.

– The last successful lunar mission was the Luna-24 probe launched by the Soviet space programme in 1976. This mission returned with geographical samples which showed the presence of water on the moon.

– Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia has tried to launch two landing missions to Mars—Mars-96 in 1996 and the Phobos Grunt in 2011. Both missions ended with the spacecraft crash-landing into the Pacific Ocean.

How could Luna-25 reach the Moon before Chandrayaan-3?

Chandrayaan-3 was launched weeks before Russia's Luna-25 and yet the Russian spacecraft could land on Moon earlier.

The reasons for that are:

Firstly, Luna-25 weighs much less than Chandrayaan-3, so that it can travel faster. Compared to Chandrayaan-3 weighing 3,900 kg, Luna-25 weighs just 1,750 kg.

Secondly, Luna-25 can store more fuel, so it does not have any fuel efficiency concerns.

How is Luna-25 different from Chandrayaan-3?

Rover: Apart from being lighter than the Indian mission, Luna-25 does not carry a rover. Chandrayaan-3 has a rover capable of moving around 500 meters.

Mission duration: The India mission is built to last only one lunar day or 14 earth days. This is because it does not have a heating mechanism to keep the electronics safe from the extreme cold temperatures during the lunar night.

– The Russian mission, on the other hand, will work for a year, meaning it has a heating mechanism as well as a power source other than just solar panels.

14. Kerala likely to face drought due to deficit monsoon

Source: The post is based on the article “Kerala likely to face drought due to deficit monsoon” published in **The Hindu on 16th August 2023**.

What is the News?

Kerala is facing a potential drought-like condition with the monsoon deficit widening.

Why does Kerala might face a potential drought-like condition?

Lack of Monsoon Rainfall: The southwest monsoon has been much weaker than expected, with only 56% of the normal rainfall received between June and August. This has raised concerns about water scarcity, especially considering low reservoir levels.

– Kerala has witnessed deficient monsoon only 14 times since 1901, with the last one in 2016.

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Low Reservoir Levels: Reservoirs managed by the Kerala State Electricity Board are at only 37% of their total capacity, far lower than the previous year.

Impact of El Niño: El Niño, a climate phenomenon, is contributing to the poor monsoon. Sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific are exceeding El Niño thresholds which is likely to continue until early 2024.

– Additionally, the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is currently neutral, further impacting monsoon conditions in Kerala.

– Among the 15 El Niño years India witnessed since 1951, only five El Niño years (1965, 1972, 1987, 2002, and 2015) affected the State.

15. India accounts for 35% of cargo handled by Russia's Arctic Murmansk port this year

Source: The post is based on the article “**India accounts for 35% of cargo handled by Russia's Arctic Murmansk port this year**” published in **The Hindu on 16th August 2023**.

What is the News?

India's connection with Russia's Arctic region has been growing, with a significant portion of cargo handled by the Murmansk port.

In the first seven months of 2023, Murmansk port handled 8 million tonnes of cargo, and 35% of this was from India, primarily coal destined for India's east coast.

Where is Murmansk port?

Murmansk port is one of the largest ice-free ports in Russia. It is located on the Kola Peninsula at the coast of Barents Sea.

The port ranks fourth in Russia in terms of processed goods and is the second-largest port in northwest Russia (after the port of St. Petersburg).

Where is the Kola Peninsula?

Kola Peninsula is a peninsula in the extreme northwest of Russia and one of the largest peninsulas of Europe.

The peninsula lies almost completely inside the Arctic Circle and is bordered by the Barents Sea to the north and by the White Sea to the east and southeast.

Where is the Barents Sea?

Barents Sea is a marginal sea of the Arctic Ocean. It is located off the northern coasts of Norway and Russia and divided between Norwegian and Russian territorial waters.

Where is the Northern Sea Route(NSR)?

The Northern Sea Route (NSR) connects the eastern and western parts of the Arctic Ocean.

It is the shortest shipping route connecting the western part of Eurasia and the Asia-Pacific region.

For instance, Suez Canal route between Europe and Asia has a distance of 21,000 kilometres, the NSR has a distance of 13,000 kilometers, reducing the to and fro sailing time from one month to less than two weeks between Europe and Asia.

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But there are challenges in navigating the NSR. The route includes the seas of the Arctic Ocean [Kara, Laptev, East Siberian and Chukchi] which remain icebound during most parts of the year.

16. 275 bird species counted during survey at Corbett Tiger Reserve

Source: The post is based on the article “**275 bird species counted during survey at Corbett Tiger Reserve**” published in **The Hindu on 16th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The findings of the survey conducted at [Corbett Tiger Reserve](#) has been released.

Who conducted the survey at the Corbett Tiger Reserve?

The survey was conducted by a team consisting of ornithologists, conservationists, volunteers from World Wide Fund (WWF) India, Tiger Conservation Foundation and Village Volunteer Protection Force.

Aim: To provide insights into the diverse bird species inhabiting at Corbett Tiger Reserve.

What are the key findings of the survey?

About 275 bird species were counted during the survey.

Two species namely **White-rumped vulture and Red-headed vulture considered Critically Endangered** by the IUCN have been documented in the survey.

Two endangered species — Pallas’s fish-eagle, Egyptian vulture were also counted by the researchers in the survey.

Four vulnerable bird species — great hornbill, great slaty woodpecker, grey-crowned prinia and river tern — have also been counted in the survey.

Around 10 near-threatened bird species — river lapwing, red-breasted parakeet, oriental darter, lesser fish-eagle, Himalayan griffon, great thick-knee, gray-headed fish-eagle, black-necked stork, Asian woolly-necked stork and Alexandrine parakeet — have also been found at the reserve.

17. WHO and the Ministry of Ayush to host the first-ever Global Summit on Traditional Medicine

Source: The post is based on the article “**WHO and the Ministry of Ayush to host the first-ever Global Summit on Traditional Medicine**” published in **PIB on 14th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit will take place in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

About First WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit:

Organized by: World Health Organization (WHO) and co-hosted by the Ministry of Ayush.

Aim: To bring together various stakeholders, such as traditional medicine practitioners, policymakers, academics, and others on a common platform to share best practices, evidence and innovation related to how traditional medicine contributes to health and sustainable development.

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Significance: Traditional and complementary medicine has been vital for health in communities for centuries and has influenced modern medical knowledge.

– About 40% of today’s medicines have natural origins, including well-known drugs like aspirin and artemisinin.

– Currently, 170 countries have informed WHO about their use of traditional medicine, seeking evidence and data to guide safe, cost-effective, and fair policies and regulations.

About WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine:

In 2022, WHO with the support of the Government of India established the Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

Mandate: The centre provides leadership on all global health matters related to traditional medicine as well as extending support to member countries in shaping various policies related to traditional medicine research, practices and public health.

Significance: It is the first and only global outpost for traditional medicine across the globe.

18. MeitY Secretary launches the ‘Graphene-Aurora Program’

Source: The post is based on the article “**MeitY Secretary launches the ‘Graphene-Aurora Program’**” published in **PIB on 14th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) Secretary has launched the ‘Graphene-Aurora program’ at a function in **Maker Village** Kochi, Kerala.

The program shall be implemented by Digital University Kerala with joint funding from MeitY and Government of Kerala and Industry partners.

What is the India Graphene Engineering and Innovation Centre (I-GEIC)?

To be established in: Kerala

Purpose: The centre shall fill the gap between R&D and commercialization by providing a complete facility to startup and industry.

– It shall also nurture the deep/emerging Graphene technology & innovation ecosystem that can guide, develop, implement and support SMEs and startups to commercialize developed graphene technologies for scale adoption.

What is a Maker Village?

Maker Village is a pioneering startup initiative of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India with Indian Institute of Information Technology, Trivandrum as the implementation agency and Kerala Startup Mission as the supporting partner.

It is India’s largest electronic hardware incubator and ESDM (Electronics System Design & Manufacturing) facility.

What is Graphene?

Graphene is often referred to as a wonder material for its extraordinary electrical and electronic properties.

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Graphene was discovered in 2004 by Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov, who received the Nobel Prize in Physics for this in 2010.

Features: It is stronger than steel, very stretchable and can be used as a flexible conductor. Its thermal conductivity is much higher than that of silver.

Applications: It can be used in touch screens, light panels and solar cells.

– It has a lot of additional applications such as: anti-corrosion coatings and paints, efficient and precise sensors, faster and efficient electronics, flexible displays, efficient solar panels, faster DNA sequencing, drug delivery and more.

19. SC plans expansion of infra; e-Courts to offer national link

Source: The post is based on the article “**SC plans expansion of infra; e-Courts to offer national link**” published in **The Hindu on 16th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The Chief Justice of India has announced a plan to expand the Supreme Court with 27 additional courts and 51 judges’ chambers.

Currently, the Supreme Court has 17 courtrooms and two registrar courts. Its judicial strength is 32 now.

Judicial Infrastructure in India:

Judicial infrastructure broadly includes dimensions such as **physical infrastructure** (courtrooms, lawyers’ chambers, and residential accommodation for judicial officers and their support staff), **digital infrastructure** which includes video-conferencing devices and internet connectivity and **Human resources**.

Physical Infrastructure of Judiciary: According to data from the National Judicial Data Grid:

– The sanctioned strength of judges is 24,280. At present, however, there are only 20,143 court halls available, of which 620 are rented.

– Only 2% of the lower and subordinate courts provide tactile pathways for the visually impaired, 20% have guide maps and 45% have help desks.

– Further, a large 68% of lower courts do not have dedicated rooms for record-keeping, and nearly half of them do not have a library.

According to an in-depth report by the legal think tank Vidhi, a majority of lower court complexes in Gujarat, Sikkim, and Tripura are not accessible through public transport.

Less than half of the district and subordinate courtrooms surveyed (40 percent or 266 out of 665 court complexes) had washrooms that were fully functioning.

Digital Infrastructure: A 2021 survey by the CJI office found that nearly 72% of lower court complexes had digital display boards, and only 41% of them had a studio-based video conferencing (VC) facility.

– The same survey found only 38 percent of lower court complexes had video linkages with jails and 14 percent had video linkages with medical officers.

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The Vidhi survey found evidence of a digital divide among the country's states and regions. For example, all lower court complexes in Chandigarh and Delhi had websites that were more helpful to users, compared to those of court complexes in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland.

Human Resources: According to India Justice Report (IJR) 2022, India has about 20,076 judges for a population of 1.4 billion, indicating a vacancy of 22 per cent among the sanctioned posts. Among high courts, there is a 30 per cent vacancy of judges.

What are the steps taken by the government to address judicial infrastructure?

Government of India has been implementing a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for the Development of Infrastructure Facilities** for Judiciary since 1993-94.

The current fund-sharing pattern of the scheme stands at 60:40 (Centre: State) and 90:10 for the eight northeastern and three Himalayan States. The Union Territories get 100% funding.

However, the funds allocated under this scheme are severely underutilized, since it was introduced.

e-Courts project

20. **Less than 1% mitigation & adaptation funding went to world's indigenous groups despite more commitment: Report**

Source: The post is based on the article "**Less than 1% mitigation & adaptation funding went to world's indigenous groups despite more commitment: Report**" published in **Down To Earth on 11th August 2023**.

What is the News?

A report has been released on the initial phase of the Inclusive Conservation Initiative (ICI).

The report highlights that even though funding commitments have risen for Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IP and LC) to improve conservation. But their overall funding situation hasn't really improved.

For instance, donors have given Indigenous Peoples and local communities less than 1% of the funds for addressing climate change impacts and adaptations.

What is the Inclusive Conservation Initiative (ICI)?

The Inclusive Conservation Initiative (ICI) was endorsed by Global Environment Facility (GEF) in 2022.

Aim: To enhance Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' (IPs and LCs) efforts to protect land, waters and natural resources to deliver global environmental benefits.

– The initiative will support enhanced Indigenous and community stewardship across 7.5 million hectares of landscapes, seascapes, and territories with high biodiversity and irreplaceable ecosystems.

Technical support and supervision by: Conservation International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

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Significance: Indigenous Peoples and local communities make up just 5% of the world's population. But they steward 25% of land and 40% of intact ecosystems on Earth. Yet, many have lacked financial support to improve and scale their sustainable management of these territories.

– This initiative will provide financial support to these Indigenous and locally-led initiatives.

21. To remove gender stereotypes from the law, a new SC handbook

Source: The post is based on the article **“To remove gender stereotypes from the law, a new SC handbook”** published in **The Hindu 17th August 2023.**

What is the News?

The Supreme Court has launched a handbook titled “Handbook on Combating Gender Stereotypes”.

What is the purpose of the “Handbook on Combating Gender Stereotypes”?

Aim: To free the judiciary and the legal community from the mechanical application of gender stereotypical language in judgments, orders, and court pleadings.

– To assist judges and the legal community in identifying, understanding and combating stereotypes about women.

Key details of the handbook:

Importance of Language used by judges: The language a judge uses reflects not only their interpretation of the law, but their perception of society as well.

– Even when the use of stereotypes does not alter the outcome of a case, stereotypical language may reinforce ideas contrary to our constitutional ethos.

– Language is critical to the life of the law. Words are the vehicle through which the values of the law are communicated. Words transmit the ultimate intention of the lawmaker or the judge to the nation.

Stereotypical words used in judgements: The handbook identifies common stereotypical words and phrases used about women, many of them routinely found in judgements.

– **For example:** In the 2017 SC ruling awarding the death penalty for the convicts in the Delhi gang-rape case, the verdict repeatedly uses the word “ravished” to say raped.

– The 2017 judgment of the Kerala High Court had said “A girl aged 24 years is weak and vulnerable, capable of being exploited in many ways”.

Alternative words to be used: The handbook also contains a glossary of gender unjust terms and suggests alternative words and phrases which may be used. **For example:**

– Instead of using words like “seductress”, “whore” or “woman of loose morals”, the word “woman” has to be used.

– The handbook also prohibits use of words like “hooker” and “prostitute” and said the term “sex worker” be used instead.

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– The word “eve-teasing” will now be termed as “street sexual harassment” and “housewife” will now become “homemaker” for judicial discourses.

False assumptions: The handbook also deals with the “so-called inherent characteristics” of women.

– One of the identified stereotypes is the idea that women are overly emotional, illogical, and cannot take decisions. The reality is that a person’s gender does not determine or influence their capacity for rational thought.

– It also refers to assumptions made about a woman’s character based on her expressive choices, such as the clothes she wears, and her sexual history.

– Such assumptions may impact the judicial assessment of her actions and statements in a case involving sexual violence. For instance, they diminish the importance of consent in sexual relationships.

22. Vishwakarma scheme will aid 30 lakh artisan families

Source: The post is based on the article “**Vishwakarma scheme will aid 30 lakh artisan families**” published in **The Hindu on 17th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved a new Scheme named “PM Vishwakarma”.

What is the PM Vishwakarma Scheme?

Type: Central Sector Scheme

Aim: To strengthen and nurture the Guru-Shishya parampara or family-based practice of traditional skills by artisans and craftspeople working with their hands and tools.

– To improve the quality, as well as the reach of products and services of artisans and craftspeople and to ensure that the Vishwakarmas are integrated with the domestic and global value chains.

Coverage: The scheme will provide support to artisans and craftspeople of rural and urban areas across India.

– Eighteen traditional trades will be covered under the scheme. These include carpenter, boat maker, armourer, blacksmith, hammer and tool kit maker, locksmith, goldsmith, potter, sculptor, stone breaker, cobbler, mason, basket/mat/broom maker/coir weaver, traditional doll and toy maker, barber, garland maker, washerman, tailor and fishing net maker.

Duration of the scheme: Five years (FY 2023-24 to FY 2027-28).

Key Features of the scheme: Artisans and craftspeople will be provided a recognition through PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card.

– The scheme has a provision of credit support of up to ₹1 lakh (first tranche) and ₹2 lakh (second tranche) with a concessional interest rate of 5%.

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- It also has a provision to provide skill upgradation, incentive for toolkit as well as digital transactions and marketing support.
- Skilling programmes will take place at both basic and advanced types. Participants will get a stipend of ₹500 per day while undergoing training.
- Beneficiaries will also receive up to ₹15,000 to buy modern tools.

23. Cabinet approves “PM-eBus Sewa” for augmenting city bus operations; priority to cities having no organized bus service

Source: The post is based on the article “**Cabinet approves “PM-eBus Sewa” for augmenting city bus operations; priority to cities having no organized bus service**” published in **PIB on 16th August 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Cabinet has approved PM-eBus Sewa to improve urban mobility and decarbonise public transport in cities.

What is an e-Bus?

An e-bus is any bus whose propulsion and accessory systems are powered exclusively by a zero-emissions electricity source.

What is the PM-eBus Sewa Scheme?

Aim: To enhance green mobility in the cities.

Coverage: The scheme will cover cities of Three lakh and above population as per census 2011 including all the Capital cities of Union Territories, North Eastern Region and Hill States.

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

Segments: The scheme has two segments:

Segment 1: In 169 cities, 10,000 e-buses will be deployed using a public-private partnership (PPP) model.

- Infrastructure will also be developed or upgraded to support the new e-buses, including the creation of behind-the-meter power infrastructure like substations.

Segment 2: In 181 other cities, infrastructure will be upgraded under the green urban mobility initiatives

- Initiatives will focus on bus priority, infrastructure, multimodal interchange facilities, automated fare collection systems and charging infrastructure.

Support for operation: States or cities will be responsible for running the bus services and making payments to the bus operators.

- The Central government will support these bus operations by providing subsidies to the extent specified in the scheme.

Benefits of the Scheme: Around 45,000 to 55,000 direct jobs are expected to be generated via the scheme.

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- The adoption of electric mobility services will help reduce noise and air pollution in Indian cities and also curb carbon emissions.
- The scheme is also expected to bring in economies of scale for the procurement of electric buses through aggregation.

24. Meet 'Pibot,' the humanoid robot that can safely pilot an airplane better than a human

Source: The post is based on the article “Meet ‘Pibot,’ the humanoid robot that can safely pilot an airplane better than a human” published on [Euronews.com](https://www.euronews.com) on 15th August.

What is the News?

A team of engineers and researchers from the Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology (KAIST) is currently developing a humanoid robot named 'Pibot' that can fly an aircraft without needing to modify the cockpit.

What is Pibot?

Pibot is the world's first humanoid pilot.

It can fly an aero plane just like a human pilot by manipulating all the single controls in the cockpit, which is designed for humans.

Key Features: It uses artificial intelligence and robotics to understand flight manuals and control the plane in real-time.

- Pibot's arms and fingers can control flight instruments even during turbulence. It has cameras to monitor the aircraft and manage controls.
- It remembers global flight charts for accurate navigation and can handle emergencies.
- Pibot communicates with air traffic controllers and humans using voice synthesis, acting as a pilot or first officer.

25. Scientists solve Manipur salamander 'puzzle'

Source: The post is based on the article “Scientists solve Manipur salamander ‘puzzle’” published in **The Hindu** on 16th August 2023.

What is the News?

In 2022, scientists explored the Khongtheng mountain range in Manipur to study *Tylototriton verrucosus*, also known as the crocodile newt.

While exploring, they discovered a new salamander species named ***Tylototriton zaimeng*** in Zaimeng Lake.

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What is *Tylostotriton zaimeng*?



Source: The Hindu

Tylostotriton zaimeng is a salamander species in the Zaimeng Lake of Manipur.

– **Note:** Salamanders are a group of amphibians typically characterized by their lizard-like appearance, with slender bodies, blunt snouts, short limbs projecting at right angles to the body, and the presence of a tail in both larvae and adults.

Named after: *Tylostotriton zaimeng* has been named after Zaimeng, a mountain lake located atop the Khongtheng mountain range in Kangpokpi district of Manipur.

– Zaimeng is the dialect spoken by the Liangmai people, a Naga tribe residing both in Nagaland and Manipur. Zaimeng in the Liangmai dialect means “puzzle” or “mystery”.

Habitat: The habitat of *Tylostotriton zaimeng* is confined to the Khongtheng mountain range in Manipur.

Features: *Tylostotriton zaimeng* — was mistaken for its close relatives *T. himalayanus* and *T. verrucosus* until now.

– However, researchers found that it had distinct characteristics that set it apart from its close relatives.

– It was found to be a medium-sized salamander unlike any other. Its head is massive and wide, with a rounded snout and protruding supratemporal bony ridges, while a well-developed sagittal ridge adorns its crown.

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Recommended conservation status: Due to its isolation and limited distribution, the scientists have advocated inclusion of the new species in the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List as a Vulnerable (VU) species.

26. INCOIS launches 'SAMUDRA' mobile app for seafarers and fishing community

Source: The post is based on the article **"INCOIS launches 'SAMUDRA' mobile app for seafarers and fishing community"** published in **The Hindu on 14th August 2023.**

What is the News?

Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services(INCOIS) has launched a new mobile application named 'SAMUDRA'.

What is the SAMUDRA app?

Full Form: SAMUDRA stands for Smart Access to Marine Users for Ocean Data Resources and Advisories.

Purpose: To offer comprehensive information on all ocean related services, useful for both seafarers and the fishing community.

Features: The app empowers users with real-time updates and critical alerts on oceanic disasters such as tsunamis, storm surges, high waves, and swell surge alerts, for the individuals and communities to stay informed and take necessary precautions towards the protection of lives and property.

Significance: The app will be especially beneficial to the fishing community as it disseminates Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) advisories which will guide them to the probable fish aggregation locations.

27. The importance of the Sulina Channel to Ukraine grain trade

Source: The post is based on the article **"The importance of the Sulina Channel to Ukraine grain trade"** published in **Indian Express on 17th August 2023.**

What is the News?

Sulina Channel has provided Ukraine with an alternative passage for its grain after Russia withdrew from the Black Sea grain deal.

What is the Danube River?

Danube is the second-longest river in Europe, after the Volga in Russia.

It flows through much of Central and Southeastern Europe, from the Black Forest into the Black Sea.

Near Romania, the river begins to spread out into its delta which has three major channels – Chilia, Sulina and St George.

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What is Sulina Channel?



Source: New York Times

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Sulina Channel is a 63 km long distributary of the Danube. It lies completely within the borders of Romania.

Of the three major channels of the Danube river, the Sulina Channel is the only one deep and wide enough for freight transport.

It is a sort of a riverine 'expressway' – crucial for transport of goods from inland to the Black Sea.

How can the Sulina Channel be used for transporting Ukraine grain?

Sulina Channel connects major Ukrainian ports on the river to the Black Sea.

Hence, ships carrying grain from Ukraine leave from Ukrainian ports such as Izmail and Reni on the mainstream (or the Chilia Channel) and head to the port of Sulina, at the mouth of the Sulina Channel.

From there, they head to Constanta, Romania's biggest seaport. Here the cargo is transferred to bigger ships that carry it out of the Black Sea into the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus straits. This route is under constant surveillance and protection of NATO.

28. Centre and WHO to launch Global Initiative on Digital Health

Source: The post is based on the article “**Centre and WHO to launch Global Initiative on Digital Health**” published in **The Hindu on 17th August 2023**.

What is the News?

India in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) will launch the Global Initiative on Digital Health.

What is the Global Initiative on Digital Health?

Launched by: India in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO)

Aim: The initiative is aimed at data convergence, interface of health platforms and investments in the digital health space around the globe.

Features: The initiative will include a digital platform which will consist of an investment tracker, an ask tracker (to understand who needs what kind of products and services) and a library of existing digital health platforms.

Significance: The initiative would aid universal health convergence and improve healthcare service delivery.

29. Flood forecast app launched by Water Commission

Source: The post is based on the article “**Flood forecast app launched by Water Commission**” published in **The Hindu on 18th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The Central Water Commission(CWC) has launched an app, called 'Floodwatch'.

What is Floodwatch App?

Purpose: To forecast the chances of floods a day in advance.

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– To provide a seven-day advisory on the chances of floods at various stations in the country where the CWC maintains its measurement gauges.

Source of data: The app utilizes advanced technologies such as satellite data analysis, mathematical modeling and real-time monitoring to deliver accurate and timely flood forecasts.

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

- A ‘green’ circle indicates ‘normal’; yellow, above normal; orange, ‘severe’; and red, ‘extreme’.
- Clicking on the circle shows the water level at the station, 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 seven days, that can be accessed via selecting specific stations.

Significance: The app marks a significant step towards utilizing smartphones to provide the public with up-to-date flood situation data and accurate forecasts spanning seven days.

30. Now, drones to monitor MGNREGA worksites

Source: The post is based on the article **“Now, drones to monitor MGNREGA worksites”** published in **The Hindu on 18th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The Union Ministry of Rural Development has asked States to use drones to monitor worksites under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act(MGNREGA) scheme.

How can drones be helpful in monitoring MGNREGA Scheme?

Drones will be helpful in addressing complaints about corruption in MNREGA works.

These complaints vary from machines being used in place of the workers, many receiving wages without doing work, or works beyond the approved list being undertaken and so on.

Drones will be especially helpful in such cases for real-time monitoring and for garnering evidence.

How is the government planning to deploy drones to monitor MGNREGA works?

Drones will be used for four types of monitoring: surveying the ongoing works, inspecting the completed works, impact assessment and special inspection in case of complaints.

Drones will be used by the ombudsperson. According to the MGNREGA Act, there should be one ombudsperson per district who is responsible for registering suo moto complaints and disposing of them within 30 days.

State governments will provide the drones to ombudspersons as needed.

However, the Union government will not be providing the States with any extra funds to deploy these drones.

State governments are expected to draw the necessary funds from the administrative head, which is roughly 10% of a State’s MGNREGA budget.

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Instead of buying drones, States can hire drone-specializing agencies.

Government has also planned to form a centralized dashboard to store the videos and photos collected from the drones, for data analysis and reporting purposes.

What is the significance of these measures?

This will be the second big technological intervention introduced to keep a check on MGNREGA workers.

From May 2022, the Union government has made it mandatory to capture attendance at all worksites using a specially-developed mobile-based application

31. Rising methane could be a sign that Earth's climate is part-way through a 'termination-level transition'

Source: The post is based on the article **"Rising methane could be a sign that Earth's climate is part-way through a 'termination-level transition'"** published in **Down To Earth on 16th August 2023.**

What is the News?

Since 2006, the levels of heat-trapping methane in the Earth's atmosphere have been increasing rapidly.

Unlike the rise in carbon dioxide, this increase in methane appears to be due to biological sources rather than fossil fuel burning.

This could be due to natural climate cycles like El Niño, or it might indicate a significant shift in the Earth's climate.

What is Methane?

[Click Here to read](#)

Rise in Methane Levels:

Methane is a much more potent greenhouse gas than CO₂ but it lasts slightly less than a decade in the atmosphere compared with centuries for CO₂.

The rate at which methane is increasing in the atmosphere has accelerated recently.

Methane had risen fast in the 19th and 20th centuries but plateaued by the end of the 1990s. This rise was driven by fossil fuel emissions, especially from gasfields and coal mines.

Then in late 2006, the amount of methane in the air climbed fast. During the 2020s the growth rate has become yet faster, faster even than during the peak of gas industry leaks in the 1980s.

This growth seems to be driven by new emissions from wetlands, especially near the equator.

This is a result of climate change: increasing rainfall has made wetlands wetter and bigger while rising temperatures have boosted plant growth, providing more decomposing matter and so more methane.

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What are Climate Terminations?

Climate terminations refer to periods of significant and often rapid climate change that mark the transition between glacial (cold) and interglacial (warmer) periods in Earth's history.

These transitions involve substantial shifts in temperature, ice sheet extent, sea level, and other climate-related factors.

During glacial periods, large ice sheets cover extensive areas of the Earth's surface, and global temperatures are lower. Interglacial periods, on the other hand, are characterized by warmer conditions, with reduced ice coverage and higher sea levels.

Past climate terminations have been identified and numbered using Roman numerals (e.g., Termination I, Termination II), with higher numbers indicating more ancient events.

Methane and Climate Terminations:

Methane spike marked shift in past Climate Terminations.

It is worth noting that the methane levels have surged since 2006. There are also ongoing climate changes driven by human activities, particularly the emission of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide.

This human-induced climate change is leading to shifts in temperature, sea levels, and weather patterns that have significant implications for ecosystems, societies, and economies worldwide.

This may be a signal that a great transition in Earth's climate has begun.

32. A software solution for preventing attacks on 5G networks

Source: The post is based on the article **"A software solution for preventing attacks on 5G networks"** published in **PIB on 17th August 2023**.

What is the News?

IITM Pravartak Technologies Foundation at IIT Madras has developed a new indigenous software technology solution that can proactively detect and prevent zero-day vulnerability attacks in the 5G networks.

Why is 5G Technology vulnerable to zero day attack?

Traditional telecom networks were built using hardware components such as switches. But around 90% of the 5G technology is implemented in software.

A 5G network incorporates several software-based technologies such as NFV, SDN, and control plane/user plane segregation.

Due to this, the attack surface area is increased manifold in this process and is impossible to manage manually. Automating the whole testing process and continuous monitoring is the only sustainable solution.

What have the researchers developed?

Researchers are developing an indigenous security testing solution for 5G core network functions and Radio Access Network (RAN) software.

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This technology solution can automatically identify zero-day vulnerabilities in the network in advance by using techniques such as fuzzing and test oracles.

Reducing zero-day vulnerabilities will reduce attack surface area, which in turn will reduce the need to pay ransom and also decrease network downtime of 5G networks which are crucial for communication.

What are Zero Day Attacks?

Zero-day is a term used in the cybersecurity world. It refers to an unknown vulnerability that can be exploited by any malicious hacker with sufficient know-how.

Zero-day attacks take place when hackers exploit the vulnerability before the software developer has a chance to patch the flaw.

They can be devastating, since only the hacker knows about them and can even sell this valuable information on the darknet, or 'simply wait to strike at an opportune moment.

33. No more bulk SIM cards as government steps in to curb fraud

Source: The post is based on the article “**No more bulk SIM cards as government steps in to curb fraud**” published in **The Hindu on 18th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has announced several steps to combat the issue of fraudulent SIM cards.

What are the steps announced by the government to combat the issue of fraudulent SIM cards?

Mandatory registration of SIM dealers: Telecom operators will do mandatory registration of franchisees, point of sale (PoS) agents and distributors. This will help in eliminating the rogue PoS who by fraudulent practices issue SIMs to anti-social/anti-national elements.

The PoS registration process includes indisputable verification by telcos. The process mandates- Written agreement between the PoS and the licensees. If a PoS indulges in any illegal activities, it will be terminated and blacklisted for a period of three years.

All the existing PoS will be registered as per this process by licensees within 12 months.

Bulk SIMs to companies discontinued: The facility to provide SIM connections in bulk to companies is being discontinued.

- The existing bulk system requires companies to preserve records of individual subscribers.
- Instead a “new business” system is being put in place where each corporate subscriber has to undertake KYC (‘Know Your Customer’) when a SIM is being issued to them.
- Physical Aadhaar printouts or cards provided as identity or address proof will also have to be verified by scanning the QR code to reduce fraud.

What are the other steps taken by the government?

Government of India has launched the **Sanchar Saathi portal**. The portal allows citizens to: 1) Check the connections registered on their names, 2) Report fraudulent or unrequired connections, 3) Block the mobile phones which are stolen/lost and 4) Check IMEI genuineness

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before buying a mobile phone.

34. Indian scientist develops novel method to improve accuracy and precision of nanomechanical testing technology

Source: The post is based on the article “**Indian scientist develops novel method to improve accuracy and precision of nanomechanical testing technology**” published in **PIB on 17th August 2023**.

What is the News?

An Indian researcher has developed a new method to test nanomechanical properties of materials at very minute scales with high precision and accuracy.

This new method significantly improves the precision and accuracy of **Nanoindentation Technique**.

What is Nanoindentation Technique?

Nanoindentation is a materials testing technique used to measure mechanical properties such as hardness, elastic modulus and other material responses at very small scales, often on the order of nanometers.

The technique involves applying a controlled and localized force to a material's surface using a sharp indenter, typically a diamond tip, and then measuring the resulting depth of penetration.

The nanoindentation technique is particularly valuable for studying materials at the micro- and nanoscale, where traditional macro-scale mechanical testing methods are not suitable or accurate.

Applications: Nanoindentation is used in a wide range of applications, including characterizing thin films, coatings, biomaterials, ceramics, polymers, metals and composites.

– It is also employed in research related to microelectronics, material development, quality control and failure analysis.

35. President launches indigenously built warship Vindhyagiri

Source: The post is based on the article “**President launches indigenously built warship Vindhyagiri**” published in **The Hindu on 18th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The President has launched the sixth vessel of the Project 17 Alpha Frigates, **'Vindhyagiri'**, a stealth ship of the Indian Navy.

What is INS Vindhyagiri?

INS Vindhyagiri is the sixth stealth frigate constructed under Project-17 Alpha.

Built by: Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) facility at Kolkata.

Named after: The ship is named after the Vindhyagiri hills in Karnataka.

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Significance: Vindhyagiri pays a befitting tribute to the distinguished service of its predecessor, the erstwhile INS Vindhyagiri, the Leander Class ASW Frigate.

– The old Vindhyagiri in its nearly 31 years of service from 1981 to 2012 had witnessed various challenging operations.

What is Project-17 Alpha?

Project-17 Alpha is also known as the Nilgiri class frigate project. The project was launched by the Indian Navy in 2019.

It involves the construction of seven new-generation stealth frigates for the Indian Navy using advanced technologies.

These frigates are being built by two state-run shipyards:

– **Mazagon Docks Limited (MDL)** is responsible for manufacturing four frigates — INS Nilgiri, Udaygiri, Taragiri and Mahendragiri.

– **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE)** will manufacture the remaining three frigates, INS Himgiri, Dunagiri and Vindhyagiri.

These ships are follow-on versions of the three Project-17 vessels, also known as the **Shivalik class frigates** in the Indian Navy.

Features: The P17A ships are advanced missile frigates measuring 149 meters in length, weighing about 6,670 tonnes, and can travel at a speed of 28 knots.

– These are capable of neutralizing threats in all three dimensions of air, surface and subsurface.

– They are being built using a special stealth design that has radar-absorbent coatings and is low-observable, making it possible for them to approach without being seen by adversaries.

– Around 75% of the equipment and systems for these ships are sourced from local companies, including small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

36. Kanniyakumari's Matti is distinct with fragrance and honey-like taste

Source: The post is based on the article “**Kanniyakumari's Matti is distinct with fragrance and honey-like taste**” published in **The Hindu on 18th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The Matti banana variety, native to Kanniyakumari district in Tamil Nadu was recently granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

What is the Matti Banana variety?

Matti banana is a variety of banana native to Kanniyakumari district in Tamil Nadu

It is also known as 'Baby Banana' owing to its nipple-like appearance.

Unlike typical banana bunches that grow straight, the Matti's fingers exhibit a distinct wind-blown appearance.

This banana has a sweet fragrance and honey-like taste.

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Local marriages are incomplete without this banana variety, mixed with payasam served in the feast.

These bananas have low total soluble solids content (TSSC) which makes it suitable for a baby food.

The corm extract from the fruit is also used as a jaundice cure.

Varieties of Matti Banana: 1) **Nal Matti** boasts a yellowish-orange colour and fine aroma 2) **Theyn [honey] Matti's** pulp tastes like honey 3) **Kal Matti** gets its name from the calcium oxalate crystals forming in its pulp and black dots on the skin 4) **Nei Matti** exudes the aroma of ghee and 5) **Sundari Matti** is facing extinction.

37. RBI launches web portal for searching unclaimed deposits

Source: The post is based on the article “**RBI launches web portal for searching unclaimed deposits**” published in **Indian Express on 18th August 2023**.

What is the News?

The Reserve Bank of India(RBI) has launched the UDGAM Portal.

What is UDGAM Portal?

UDGAM stands for Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to Access information.

Purpose: To aid users to identify their unclaimed deposits/ accounts and enable them to either claim the deposit amount or make their deposit accounts operative at their respective banks.

Developed by: Reserve Bank Information Technology Pvt Ltd (ReBIT), Indian Financial Technology & Allied Services (IFTAS) and participating banks.

Coverage: Initially, users would be able to access the details of their unclaimed deposits in respect of seven banks presently available on the portal.

– The search facility for remaining banks on the portal would be made available in a phased manner.

38. 9 more supercomputers to be added under National Supercomputing Mission, list of four current fastest machines in India

Source: The post is based on the article “**9 more supercomputers to be added under National Supercomputing Mission, list of four current fastest machines in India**” published in **TOI on 19th August 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Cabinet has recently approved an extension of the Digital India programme.

The programme also proposes nine more supercomputers to be added under the National Supercomputing Mission.

What is the National Supercomputing Mission?

[Click Here to read](#)

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Which are the fastest Supercomputers in India?

India's fastest supercomputers are AIRAWAT, PARAM Siddhi, Pratyush and Mihir.

AIRAWAT: It is installed at the Center for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune.

– It stands as India's largest and fastest AI supercomputing system, with a remarkable speed of 13,170 teraflops (Rpeak).

– It has been manufactured by Netweb Technologies.

– It ranked number 75 at the International Supercomputing Conference in Germany and was listed as such in the 61st edition of the Top 500 Global Supercomputing list.

PARAM Siddhi-AI: It is installed at Center for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune. It is ranked at No. 131 position:

– It aims to serve as AI / HPC specific Cloud Computing Infrastructure for INDIA subsuming academia, R&D institutes and start-ups.

Pratyush supercomputer: This supercomputer is installed at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology. It is a Cray XC40 machine. It is ranked at No. 169 position.

Mihir supercomputer: It is installed at the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting in Noida. It is also a Cray XC40 machine. It is ranked at No. 316.

39. India's first 3D-printed post office inaugurated in Bengaluru: How does 3D printing work?

Source: The post is based on the article **"India's first 3D-printed post office inaugurated in Bengaluru: How does 3D printing work?"** published in **Indian Express on 19th August 2023**

What is the News?

India's first 3D-printed post office was inaugurated in Bengaluru's Cambridge Layout.

Multinational company Larsen & Toubro Limited built the post office with technological support from IIT Madras.

What is 3D Printing?

3D printing, also known as additive manufacturing, is a process that uses computer-created design to make three-dimensional objects layer by layer.

It is an additive process, in which layers of a material like plastic, composites or bio-materials are built up to construct objects that range in shape, size, rigidity and color.

How is 3D printing done?

To carry out 3D printing, one needs a personal computer connected to a 3D printer. All they need to do is design a 3D model of the required object on computer-aid design (CAD) software and press 'print'. The 3D printer does the rest of the job.

3D printers construct the desired object by using a layering method, which is the complete opposite of the subtractive manufacturing processes.

These machines are capable of printing anything from ordinary objects like a ball or a spoon to complex moving parts like hinges and wheels.

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What are some of the notable examples of 3D Printing?

3D printing is being used in a host of different industries like healthcare, automobile and aerospace.

In May 2023, aerospace manufacturing company Relativity Space launched a test rocket made entirely from 3D-printed parts, measuring 100 feet tall and 7.5 feet wide. However, shortly after its take off, it suffered a failure.

At the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the healthcare industry used 3D printers to make much-needed medical equipment, like swabs, face shields, and masks, as well as the parts to fix their ventilator.

40. Number of Jan Dhan Accounts Cross 50 Crore

Source: The post is based on the article **“Number of Jan Dhan Accounts Cross 50 Crore”** published in **PIB on 19th August 2023**

What is the News?

The total number of Jan Dhan accounts have crossed 50 crore as on 9th August 2023.

What is Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana(PMJDY)?

National Mission on Financial Inclusion popularly known as Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) was launched in 2014. It has completed almost 9 years.

It offers multiple advantages to account holders such as a bank account without requirement of minimum balance, free of cost RuPay debit cards with inbuilt accident insurance of Rs. 2 lakh and overdraft facility of up to Rs. 10,000.

Significance: The scheme has been successful in changing the financial landscape of the country and has brought near saturation in bank accounts for adults.

– The success of PMJDY also lies in the comprehensive nature of the scheme with an attempt to connect the last mile with the formal banking system through technology, collaboration and innovation.

[Click Here to read more](#)

What are the achievements of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana(PMJDY)?

As per the latest reports submitted by banks, the total number of Jan Dhan accounts have crossed 50 crore as on 9th August 2023.

Out of these accounts 56% accounts belong to women and 67% accounts have been opened in Rural / Semi-urban areas.

The deposits in these accounts are above Rs. 2.03 lakh crore and about 34 crore RuPay cards have been issued in these accounts free of cost.

The average balance in PMJDY accounts is Rs. 4,076 and more than 5.5 crore PMJDY accounts are receiving DBT benefits.

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41. Why the RBI has directed lenders not to levy penal interest on borrowers

Source: The post is based on the article “**Why the RBI has directed lenders not to levy penal interest on borrowers**” published in **Indian Express on 19th August 2023**

What is the News?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a fresh set of guidelines for banks and other regulated entities (REs) on the imposition of penal charges on loan borrowers.

These guidelines have been issued after it was reported that many banks use penal rates of interest over and above the applicable interest rates in case of defaults / non-compliance by the borrower with the terms on which credit facilities were sanctioned.

What do RBI guidelines say?

According to RBI guidelines, penalties charged for default on interest payments or non-compliance of material terms and conditions of loan contract by the borrower would now be accrued as ‘penal charges’ instead of ‘penal interest’.

To put it simply, lending entities would not be able to levy an ad-hoc additional penal rate of interest over and above the applicable rate of interest.

For perspective about penal interest: say the borrower’s EMI payment for the month of April is Rs 1,000 at 10% interest rate. They default on making a timely EMI payment which subjects them to an additional interest payment of 24% per annum (or 2% per month) over and above the interest component (at 10% of principal amount) already payable that month.

RBI guidelines direct that ‘penal interest’ (at 2% p.a. in the example) be replaced with an ‘penal charge’, with no additional component to the rate of interest.

There shall be no capitalisation of penal charges, that is, it shall be levied separately and not be added to the principal outstanding amount.

The quantum of penal charges must be proportional to the defaults or non-compliance of material terms and conditions of a loan contract up to a certain threshold.

This is to be determined by the lending entities themselves and must not be discriminatory within a particular loan/product category.

What will be the impact of these guidelines on consumers?

Supervisory reviews have indicated divergent practices amongst the regulated entities (REs) with regard to levy of penal interest/charges leading to customer grievances and disputes.

Now, REs will have to disclose the quantum and reason for penal charges clearly to the customers in the loan agreement and most important terms and conditions/Key Fact Statement (KFS).

These will also be displayed on the website of REs under interest rates and service charges section.

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42. Revolutionizing Animal Feed: TDB-DST partners with Chemlife Innovations for Innovative Bio-Trace Minerals Project

Source: The post is based on the article “**Revolutionizing Animal Feed: TDB-DST partners with Chemlife Innovations for Innovative Bio-Trace Minerals Project**” published in **PIB on 19th August 2023**

What is the News?

The Technology Development Board (TDB), part of the Department of Science & Technology (DST) has partnered with Chemlife Innovations Pvt. Ltd to launch **Innovative Bio-Trace Minerals Project**.

What is the Innovative Bio-Trace Minerals Project?

Aim: The project aims to revolutionize the manufacturing of bio-trace minerals for animal feed particularly targeting the livestock and poultry/dairy sectors. These minerals are essential for animals' health.

Financial Support: TDB is giving ₹84 lakh to this project which is a big part of the total cost.

Technology used: Chemlife Innovations is using new technology called 'Accelerated Natural Bio Transformation' (ANBioT) to make these special minerals.

– The project also utilizes pupa proteins which are rich in hydroxy amino acids. This will be an economical alternative to imported ligands like yeast hydrolysate and Methionine hydroxy analogue (MHA).

– The project also contributes to the circular economy by repurposing silkworm pupae meal, reducing waste from the silk industry.

Significance: This project aligns harmoniously with the **National Livestock Mission**. The mission aims to enhance livestock productivity, optimize feed and fodder resources and infuse technology into livestock management.

43. Amid trade slump, signs of investment pick-up

Source: The post is based on the article “**Amid trade slump, signs of investment pick-up**” published in **The Hindu on 19th August 2023**

What is the News?

India's merchandise exports have faced a decline. But the growth in imports of electronics and machinery suggests domestic demand and investments are picking up.

India's Trade and Investment Figures:

Decline in exports: India's exports fell by 15.9%. This decline in exports appears broad-based and the slowdown in demand is not just stemming from the West, but also from emerging markets, especially the Asia-Pacific, India's largest regional export destination.

Imports Growth: India's exports has fallen. But the imports of electronics and machinery has hit a record high at \$4.7 billion. This suggests increased domestic demand and private investments.

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– For instance, five out of fifteen key import categories saw growth. Electronics grew by 14.9%, and machinery reached a record monthly import of \$4.7 billion.

Trade Deficit: The trade deficit in July rose to \$20.7 billion. Some economists caution that the trade deficit could grow more in the future due to rising commodity prices and export restrictions on agricultural products.

44. Bills seeking to replace IPC, CrPC, Indian Evidence Act referred to Standing Committee

Source: The post is based on the article “**Bills seeking to replace IPC, CrPC, Indian Evidence Act referred to Standing Committee**” published in **The Hindu on 19th August 2023**

What is the News?

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill, 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023 have been referred to the Standing Committee on Home Affairs.

These bills seek to replace the Indian Penal Code, 1860; Criminal Procedure Code, 1898 and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.

What are the key highlights of the three bills?

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill, 2023:

The bill seeks to replace the IPC by repealing 22 of its provisions, proposes changes to 175 existing provisions and introduces eight new sections. It contains a total of 356 provisions.

The punishment for all types of gang rape will now include 20 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment.

The punishment for the rape of a minor will include the imposition of the death penalty. Various offences have also been made gender neutral.

For the first time capital punishment has been introduced for the offence of mob lynching apart from the offence being made punishable with 7 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment.

The bill repeals the offence of sedition, which was widely criticized as a colonial relic that curbed free speech and dissent. However, upon closer inspection, it can be seen that the provision has been introduced under a new name and with a more expansive definition for the offence.

The bill introduces community service as a form of punishment for specific crimes, which can help in reforming offenders and reducing overcrowding in prisons.

The Bill also criminalizes sexual intercourse under the false pretext of marriage or by deceitful means. A maximum of 10-year imprisonment has been proposed for the offence.

The provision for the offence of adultery has also been omitted. This is in line with the Supreme Court's ruling in 2018 in the case of *Joseph Shine v. Union of India*, where Section 497 of the IPC, which criminalized adultery, was held to be unconstitutional.

The provision legalising marital rape has however been retained.

Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, 2023:

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The Bill will replace the CrPC by repealing nine of its provisions. It proposes changes to 160 provisions and introduces nine new provisions. It contains a total of 533 sections.

Section 230 has been introduced to ensure that a copy of the FIR is made available to the accused and the victim free of cost and within fourteen days from the date of production or appearance of the accused.

The Bill also permits the filing of a **zero FIR** from any part of the country. It also allows the facility for an accused person to be examined through electronic means, like video conferencing.

Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023:

The bill will replace the Indian Evidence Act. It proposes changes to 23 provisions and introduces one new provision. It contains 170 sections in total.

The Bill permits the admissibility of an electronic or digital record as evidence and will have legal validity as documentary evidence.

The ambit of what constitutes secondary evidence has also been expanded in the bill.

45. Govt planning skill training for 2 crore women under 'Lakhpati Didi' scheme

Source: The post is based on the article “**Govt planning skill training for 2 crore women under 'Lakhpati Didi' scheme**” published in **The Hindu on 19th August 2023**

What is the News?

Government is planning skill development training for two crore women under the 'Lakhpati Didi' scheme.

What is the Lakhpati Didi Scheme?

Aim: To provide skill development training to women to encourage them to establish micro-enterprises so that they can earn at least Rs 1 lakh annually.

Target: Government's goal is to create two crore “lakhpati didis” (prosperous sisters) in villages through women self-help groups (SHGs).

Skills covered: The women would be trained in skills like plumbing, LED bulb making and operating and repairing drones among others.

– Initially women in around 15,000 self-help groups (SHGs) would be trained to fly and repair drones.

– This training will not only create new avenues for income generation but also equip women with cutting-edge skills.

What are Self-Help Groups (SHGs)?

[Click Here to read](#)

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46. WHO South-East Asia Region commits to further enhance efforts to end TB, adopt Gandhinagar Declaration

Source: The post is based on the article “**WHO South-East Asia Region commits to further enhance efforts to end TB, adopt Gandhinagar Declaration**” published in **DD News on 19th August 2023**

What is the News?

The WHO South-East Asia Region has committed to further accelerate efforts to end tuberculosis by 2030 with member countries adopting the **Gandhinagar Declaration**.

What is the Gandhinagar Declaration?

The Gandhinagar Declaration was adopted by the WHO South-East Asia Region member countries at the meeting held to follow up on the progress made to end Tuberculosis(TB) in the region.

The declaration calls for the establishment of high-level multisectoral commissions in each country to coordinate efforts and monitor progress toward ending TB and other diseases. These commissions can also strengthen health systems and universal health coverage.

It also emphasizes the use of science and technology to provide equitable TB services accessible to everyone, regardless of social, cultural, or demographic differences.

It underscores the need for resources to meet TB coverage goals and address underlying social factors.

The declaration also urges WHO to continue prioritizing TB and providing leadership and technical assistance for sustained progress.

About TB Cases in WHO South-East Asia (SEA) Region:

The WHO South-East Asia Region has 11 Member States – Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, **India**, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste.

This region is home to 26% of the world’s population. **But about 43% of all TB cases in the world are in this region (according to the WHO Global TB Report 2021).**

In 2020, around 4.3 million people got sick with TB and about 700,000 died because of it. This is more than half of all the TB deaths globally, which were about 1.3 million in that year.

TB deaths have been increasing for more than ten years and are now close to what they were in 2015.