



Factly Compilation

11th to 16th September, 2023

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1. India-Middle East-Europe mega economic corridor: What is the project and why is it being proposed?

Source: The post is based on the article “**India-Middle East-Europe mega economic corridor: What is the project and why is it being proposed?**” published in **Indian Express on 11th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Prime Minister has announced the launch of the India-Middle East-Europe mega economic corridor.

What is India-Middle East-Europe Mega Economic Corridor?

Aim: To reshape the trade route between the Gulf, Europe and South Asia, connecting them by rail and sea links.

Features: The corridor will consist of two separate corridors — the Eastern Corridor, connecting India to West Asia/Middle East, and the Northern Corridor, connecting West Asia/Middle East to Europe.

– It will involve transit by ship between India and Saudi Arabia, followed by a rail link to the UAE and likely to Jordan from where the shipment will move by sea to Turkey and further by rail.

– Along with the railway track, the members want to lay a cable for energy and digital connectivity, as well as a pipe for clean hydrogen export.

Countries involved: India, US, UAE, Saudi Arabia, European Union (EU), Italy, France and Germany.

Part of: The corridor is part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII) — a collaborative effort by G7 nations to fund infrastructure projects in developing nations. PGII is considered to be the bloc’s counter to China’s Belt and Road Initiative.

Significance: The corridor will safeguard regional supply chains, boost trade accessibility, and enable a greater emphasis on environmental, social, and governance consequences.

– It will be designed to increase efficiencies, save costs, promote economic cohesion, create jobs, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, leading to a radical integration of Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

– The project will allow the countries involved to play a key role in the global connective tissue of commerce, of digital communications and of energy.

2. G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration

Source: The post is based on the article “**G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration**” published in **PIB on 11th September 2023**

What is the News?

The leaders at India’s G20 Summit 2023 arrived at a joint communique — called the G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration.

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What is the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration?

THE NEW DELHI DECLARATION

ON UKRAINE WAR



ALL STATES must act in a manner consistent with purposes and principles of UN charter in its entirety.
THEY MUST REFRAIN from threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition against territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state; also from use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible.
PEACEFUL RESOLUTION of conflicts, and efforts to address crises as well as diplomacy and dialogue are critical.
"THERE WERE different views and assessments of the situation."
"TODAY'S ERA must not be of war."

ON CLIMATE CHANGE



NEED TO ACCELERATE efforts to phase down unabated coal power, in line with national circumstances.
WILL WORK towards facilitating low-cost financing for developing countries to support their transition to low carbon.
WILL PURSUE and encourage efforts to triple renewable energy capacity globally through existing targets and policies, in line with national circumstances by 2030.
REITERATE our commitment to take action to scale up sustainable finance.
REITERATE use of carbon pricing and non-pricing mechanisms and incentives toward carbon neutrality and net zero.
RECOGNISE need for increased global investments to meet our climate goals of the Paris agreement.
NOTE NEED OF \$5.8-5.9 trillion in pre-2030 period required for developing countries, in particular for their needs to implement their emission targets.
CALLS ON parties to set an ambitious, transparent, and trackable New Collective Quantified Goal of climate finance in 2024, from a floor of \$100 billion a year.

ON GRAIN/FOOD/ENERGY SECURITY



CALLS ON Russia and Ukraine to ensure immediate and unimpeded deliveries of grain, foodstuffs, and fertilizers/inputs from Russia and Ukraine.
EMPHASISING importance of sustaining food and energy security, called for cessation of military destruction or other attacks on relevant infrastructure.
POTENTIAL FOR high levels of volatility in food and energy markets remains.

ON ECONOMIES & FINANCIAL MARKETS



"WILL PROTECT the vulnerable, through equitable growth and enhancing macroeconomic and financial stability."
REAFFIRM April 2021 exchange rate commitment made by G20 finance ministers and central bank governors.
ENDORSE financial stability board's high-level recommendations for regulation, supervision and oversight of crypto-assets, activities.
FINANCE MINISTERS and central bank governors will discuss taking forward the cryptocurrency roadmap at their meeting in October.
RENEW our commitment to ensure a level-playing field and fair competition by discouraging protectionism, market distorting practices.

ON GLOBAL DEBT VULNERABILITIES



COMMIT TO promoting resilient growth by urgently and effectively addressing debt vulnerabilities in developing countries.
CALL FOR swift conclusion of the debt treatment for Ethiopia.

ON HEALTH



REMAIN COMMITTED to strengthening global health architecture.
WILL ENHANCE resilience of health systems and support development of climate-resilient and low-carbon health systems in collaboration with multilateral banks.

Source: Indian Express

Russia-Ukraine War: The declaration has been able to include the mention of the war.

– It said that today's era must not be of war. The leaders also underscored that all states must act in a manner consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter in its entirety.

– The leaders also acknowledged the impact of the war on global food and energy security, supply chains, macro-financial stability, inflation and growth.

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Economic Growth: The declaration acknowledges the challenges faced by MSMEs. It welcomes the Jaipur call for action to help in integration of MSMEs in international trade.

– The leaders have also committed to strengthen multilateral development banks, which was a key agenda for the Indian presidency.

Gender Equality: The declaration reaffirms that gender equality is of fundamental importance, and that investing in the empowerment of all women and girls, has a multiplier effect in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

On Terrorism: The leaders condemned all forms of terrorism and committed to meet the needs of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and FATF Style Regional Bodies.

Green Development Pact for a Sustainable Future: It stresses the need to implement clean, sustainable, just, affordable, and inclusive energy transitions.

– One important element is the mention of the need to build reliable, diverse, responsible, and sustainable value chains of critical minerals, semiconductors and related technologies.

Multilateral Institutions for the 21st Century: It speaks of reforming international financial institutions.

– One of the most important elements is that reform of the UN Security Council was agreed to for the first time in the G20 and there was a strong push towards reforms for better, bigger, and more effective Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs).

– They also called for managing debt vulnerabilities of low and middle-income countries and the start of exchange of tax-relevant information on crypto assets by 2027.

Technological Transformation & Digital Public Infrastructure: This chapter contains elements of building digital public infrastructure, crypto-assets, and harnessing Artificial Intelligence (AI) responsibly.

– On AI, they agreed to pursue a pro-innovation regulatory/governance approach that maximizes the benefits and takes into account the risks associated with the use of AI.

– The G20 leaders also agreed on a G20 framework for digital public infrastructure and Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository (GDPIR). The framework calls for building interoperable solutions and formulating laws that can ensure that DPIs are safe, secure, trusted, and governed transparently.

– It also talks about a comprehensive toolkit which is aimed at improving cyber education and cyber awareness for the protection and empowerment of children and youth.

– Another key win for India's G20 presidency was to gather consensus around creating a global regulatory framework for crypto-assets.

3. G20 declaration on health: Mention of India's 3 priorities, digital push

Source: The post is based on the article “G20 declaration on health: Mention of India's 3 priorities, digital push” published in **Indian Express on 11th September 2023**

What is the News?

All three health priorities of India's G20 presidency found a mention in the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration.

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What are the three health priorities of India that were included in the G20 New Delhi Leaders Declaration?

Firstly, Building resilient systems for health emergency prevention, preparedness, and response.

Secondly, Strengthening cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector with focus on ensuring equitable availability and access to vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics during a pandemic.

Thirdly, Creating a platform for sharing digital health innovations and solutions to ensure better and universal health coverage, like CoWIN and e-Sanjeevani.

Note: The consensus was reached with some compromises: India did not insist on countries contributing towards a \$200-million fund for a digital health programme or on a permanent platform for sharing knowledge, intellectual property rights and resources for developing vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics.

What is the Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH)?

The Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH) was launched by India in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

It aims to address the need for digital health solutions that can be shared and used by WHO member states.

GIDH has four main pillars — an investment tracker, a repository of existing digital health solutions, knowledge sharing for implementation and country-specific adaptation of these solutions, and an ask tracker to monitor the needs of different countries.

What is an Interim Medical Countermeasure Platform?

The Interim Medical Countermeasure Platform is a temporary solution to ensure fair access to medical countermeasures during pandemics.

It was proposed because there was no agreement on creating a permanent platform.

The interim platform will be led by an inclusive decision-making arrangement, including effective representation of low- and middle-income countries and convened by the WHO.

Some countries have opposed this interim platform because it is believed that it may favor G7 nations, which hold many patents for drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines.

The concern is also that an interim solution could be used as an excuse to delay a legally binding pandemic treaty and may not adequately address the needs of poorer countries.

What is the role proposed for traditional medicine?

India's G20 presidency also pushed for integration of evidence-based traditional medicine practices with modern medicine.

A global summit on traditional medicine was hosted on the sidelines of the health ministers' meeting last month.

The document acknowledged the potential of evidence-based traditional and complementary medicine practices in public health delivery systems, provided they are rigorously and scientifically validated.

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4. India's G20 Presidency shifts focus from women's development to women-led development

Source: The post is based on the article “**India's G20 Presidency shifts focus from women's development to women-led development**” published in **PIB on 11th September 2023**

What is the News?

The G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration 2023 has incorporated the outcomes of the G20 Ministerial Conference for Women Empowerment in Gandhinagar.

The declaration has shifted from just women's development to women-led development.

What does the G20 New Delhi Declaration say on Women Empowerment?

The G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration focuses on 'Enhancing Economic and Social Empowerment', 'Bridging the Gender Digital Divide', 'Driving Gender Inclusive Climate Action' and 'Securing Women's Food Security, Nutrition and Well-Being'.

The declaration has agreed to the creation of a Working Group on the empowerment of women to support the G20 Women's Ministerial which will convene its first meeting during the Brazilian G20 Presidency.

Significance: This reflects India's commitment to gender equality and has been made possible through the active involvement of G20 leaders and various countries.

5. G20 leaders endorses Goa Roadmap and 'Travel for LiFE' program to provide big boost to tourism sector

Source: The post is based on the article “**G20 leaders endorses Goa Roadmap and 'Travel for LiFE' program to provide big boost to tourism sector**” published in **PIB on 11th September 2023**

What is the News?

G20 leaders have endorsed the significance of the 'Goa Roadmap for Tourism' as a path towards achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs).

What is the Goa Roadmap for Tourism?

The 'Goa Roadmap' is an outcome of India's G20 Tourism Track. It is a blueprint for sustainable global tourism.

It is aligned with the theme of India's G20 Presidency and underscores the role of tourism in society, the economy, and environmental efforts.

The roadmap focuses on five interconnected priorities. They are: green tourism; digitisation; destination management; skills development and support for tourism micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

These priorities have been endorsed by all G20 countries, emphasizing their commitment to achieving sustainable, resilient, and inclusive tourism.

What is the 'Tourism for Tomorrow' Initiative?

It will be launched by the Ministry of Tourism to identify best practices and case studies aligned with five priorities of G20 Goa roadmap which have successfully been implemented by States, Destinations and Industry Stakeholders. These best practices can be replicated and scaled up across the country.

The competition will be launched on World Tourism Day on September 27.

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What is the Travel for LiFE initiative?

The Travel for LiFE initiative is inspired by the Prime Minister's vision of LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment).

This initiative encourages tourists and tourist businesses to take simple yet impactful actions for environmental protection and climate action, aligning with the program's goal of promoting responsible and sustainable tourism.

6. Japan keen to deepen defence ties with India, says Kishida

Source: The post is based on the article “**Japan keen to deepen defence ties with India, says Kishida**” published in **The Hindu on 11th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Japanese Prime Minister has talked about the India-Japan relations.

What are the key highlights from the Japan PM statement on India-Japan relations?

Defence cooperation: Japan sees India as a crucial partner in the Indo-Pacific region and aims to enhance defense cooperation for maritime security.

– The joint exercises between Japan's Self-Defence Forces and the Indian Armed Forces emphasized the importance of defense cooperation and exchanges with India to maintain peace, freedom, and the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific.

On the Indo-Pacific region: Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy is inclusive and not aimed at any specific country.

– The strategy aims to uphold and reinforce a free and open international order based on rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region.

– However, the Japanese PM expressed concerns about the challenging security environment in the region.

– He also said that Japan is opposed to unilateral changes in the East and South China Seas and North Korea's missile activities.

On G-20 New Delhi Declaration: Japan PM said that the declaration addresses complex global crises and acknowledges the impact of Russia's aggression in Ukraine on the world economy.

– While the declaration may not explicitly condemn Russia, it calls for refraining from the use or threat of force to seek territorial acquisition and emphasizes the importance of global assistance to vulnerable populations in conflict zones.

7. On the crime of 'false promise to marry'

Source: The post is based on the article “**On the crime of 'false promise to marry'**” published in **The Hindu on 11th September 2023**

What is the News?

The proposed Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 identifies 'sexual intercourse on false promise of marriage' as an offense.

What is Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS),2023?

[Click Here to read](#)

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What does the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS),2023 say on a false promise to marry?

Chapter 5 of the Bill: It is titled as “Offenses against women and children” and describes sexual intercourse by employing deceitful means.

Section 69: It creates two violations:

Deceitful means: It will include false promise of employment or promotion, inducement or marrying after suppressing identity.

False promise to marry: It will be attracted only when a man makes a promise to marry a woman, with the intention of breaking it, for the purpose of getting her consent and sexually exploiting her.

Penalty: Both offenses will extract a penalty of up to 10 years of imprisonment.

How does IPC deal with cases of false promise to marry?

IPC dealt with these cases through a joint reading of Sections 375 and 90

Section 375: It defines rape and defines consent as “an unequivocal voluntary agreement when the woman by words, gestures or any form of verbal or non-verbal communication, communicates a willingness to participate in the specific sexual act.”

– This section lists 7 types of consent which would amount to rape if violated including the consent taken through fear of death, hurt or intoxication.

Section 90: Consent, given under “fear of injury” or “misconception of fact,” cannot be considered as consent.

What is the difference between false promise of marriage’ vs ‘breach of promise’?

The law has distinguished between a ‘false promise’ and a ‘breach of promise’ on the basis of proving if the man intended to marry at the time of engaging in sex.

The SC observed that a false promise is given on the understanding by its maker that it will be broken but a breach of promise is made in good faith but subsequently not fulfilled.

Put simply, if a man can prove he intended to marry the woman before he entered into a sexual relationship but later is unable to due to whatever reason, it is not legally punishable.

What did the Supreme Court say on a false promise to marry?

In 2021, the Supreme Court reiterated that under Section 375, a woman’s consent must involve an active and reasoned deliberation towards the proposed act.

In 2023, Supreme Court said every breach of promise is not rape. It said “One cannot deny a possibility that the accused might have given a promise with all seriousness to marry her, and subsequently might have encountered certain circumstances unforeseen by him or the circumstances beyond his control, which prevented him”.

8. Historic moment in Global Energy Sector: Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) announced at G20 event

Source: The post is based on the article “**Historic moment in Global Energy Sector: Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) announced at G20 event**” published in **PIB on 11th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Indian Prime Minister has launched the Global Biofuel Alliance during the G20 Summit in New Delhi.

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What is the Global Biofuel Alliance?

Global Biofuel Alliance is an India-led initiative to develop an alliance of Governments, International organizations and Industry to facilitate adoption of biofuels.

Aim: To position biofuels as a key to energy transition and contribute to jobs and economic growth.

Features: The alliance will support worldwide development and deployment of sustainable biofuels by offering capacity-building exercises across the value chain, technical support for national programs and promoting policy lessons-sharing.

– It will also facilitate mobilizing a virtual marketplace to assist industries, countries, ecosystem players and key stakeholders in mapping demand and supply, as well as connecting technology providers to end users.

Countries and organizations which have already joined GBA: 19 countries and 12 international organizations have already agreed to join GBA:

– **G20 countries supporting GBA:** Argentina, Brazil, Canada, India, Italy, South Africa and USA

– **G20 Invitee Countries supporting GBA:** Bangladesh, Singapore, Mauritius and UAE

– **Non G20 supporting GBA:** Iceland, Kenya, Guyana, Paraguay, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Finland

– **International organizations:** World Bank, Asian Development Bank, World Economic Forum, World LPG Organization, UN Energy for All, UNIDO, Biofutures Platform, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Energy Agency, International Energy Forum, International Renewable Energy Agency, World Biogas Association.

Significance of the alliance for India:

Firstly, for India, which is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over 85 percent of its requirement of the commodity, increasing the use of biofuels is a key tool towards two ends: **1)** reducing dependency on energy imports and **2)** limiting the carbon footprint of the country's rapidly growing energy use.

Secondly, the alliance will help accelerate India's existing biofuels programs such as PM-JIVAN Yojna, SATAT and GOBARdhan scheme thereby contributing to increased farmers' income, creating jobs and overall development of the Indian ecosystem.

9. Apple country gets ground ready for cannabis cultivation

Source: The post is based on the article **"Apple country gets ground ready for cannabis cultivation"** published in **The Hindu on 11th September 2023**

What is the News?

Himachal Pradesh government is taking steps to legalize cannabis (hemp) cultivation in the State.

What is Hemp?

Hemp is a botanical class of *Cannabis sativa* cultivars grown specifically for industrial or medicinal use.

It is produced in parts of Himachal Pradesh though it is illegal under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.

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What does the NDPS act say on Cannabis Cultivation?

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 prohibits the sale and production of cannabis resin and flowers.

But Section 10 of the Act empowers the States to make rules regarding the cultivation of any cannabis plant, production, possession, transport, consumption, use and purchase and sale, and consumption of cannabis (except charas).

The States are empowered to permit, by general or special order, the cultivation of hemp only for obtaining fiber or seeds or for horticultural purposes.

In 2017, Uttarakhand became the first State in the country to legalize cannabis cultivation.

What is the Himachal Pradesh Government planning on Cannabis?

Himachal Pradesh government is taking steps to legalize cannabis (hemp) cultivation in the State.

Government sees this move as a way to utilize cannabis's medicinal properties, generate revenue, and support farmers who have long requested the ban on cultivation be lifted.

However, some experts and activists are concerned about the potential negative effects, including increased drug abuse, the nexus between illegal cannabis producers and politicians, and the need to address social, economic, and political factors.

But supporters argue that hemp has various uses, including phytoremediation, cloth manufacturing, medicinal applications and the pulp and paper industry.

10. PM, Saudi Crown Prince chair SPC meeting: What is the Strategic Partnership Council

Source: The post is based on the article “**PM, Saudi Crown Prince chair SPC meeting: What is the Strategic Partnership Council**” published in **Indian Express on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister co-chaired the first summit-level meeting of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC).

What is the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC)?

Setup in: 2019

– **Note:** India is the fourth country with which Saudi Arabia formed such a partnership, after the UK, France, and China.

Aim: To establish a high-level council to steer the Indo-Saudi relationship.

Pillars: SPC has two main pillars: 1) Committee on Political, Security, Social and Cultural Cooperation and 2) Committee on Economy and Investments.

– Both committees have four functional levels of engagements: Summit level (Prime Minister & Crown Prince); Ministerial-level; Senior Officials Meetings and Joint Working Groups (JWGs).

What happened during the talks between India and Saudi Arabia?

India and Saudi Arabia have decided to expedite implementation of the \$50-billion West Coast refinery project and identified energy, defence, semiconductor and space as areas for intensified cooperation.

– **Note:** The West Coast refinery project is a 60 million tonnes refinery-cum-petrochemical complex to be built on the Maharashtra coast by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum

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Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) from India and Saudi Arabian Oil Co (Saudi Aramco) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (Adnoc).

The two countries also agreed to diversify the current status of their hydrocarbons relationship into a comprehensive energy partnership and inked eight pacts to boost cooperation in a range of areas, including digitisation and investment.

Both countries have also agreed to establish a joint task force to help identify and channel the \$100 billion worth of investments committed by Saudi Arabia in 2019. (Half of this was for the West Coast refinery project).

11. Kota Police, coaching centres join hands to help students address mental health issues

Source: The post is based on the article **“Kota Police, coaching centres join hands to help students address mental health issues”** published in **The Hindu on 13th September 2023**

What is the News?

Allen Career Institute and the Kota Police department have joined hands to organize a programme called ‘Creating Hope Through Action’.

The programme focused on the importance of mental health and strategies to reduce suicide rates, particularly among students.

What is the data on suicide rate in Kota among students?

According to police data, 15 students died by suicide in Kota in 2022, 18 in 2019, 20 in 2018, seven in 2017, 17 in 2016, and 18 in 2015.

In 2023, 23 students have died by suicide. This year has recorded the highest number of students’ suicides since 2013.

What are the steps taken by Kota Police to reduce suicide among students?

Kota Police has set up a dedicated **“Student Cell”** to reach out to students and make attempts to detect early signs of stress and depression.

The cell has a control room where personnel are deputed to receive calls on the dedicated helpline.

They attend to the problems reported on calls and direct them to counselors if a student needs professional help.

There are teams that conduct random checks in hostels, interact with students, counsel them and report to their parents if they spot some signs of pressure, stress or depression.

The police personnel chosen under this cell are all in their 40s and have teenage children which will help them in understanding the challenges faced by the students.

12. Election Commissioner of India visits Maldives to observe Presidential Elections 2023

Source: The post is based on the article **“Election Commissioner of India visits Maldives to observe Presidential Elections 2023”** published in **PIB on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

Election Commissioner of India is leading a three-member delegation to Maldives to observe the conduct of the Presidential Election, 2023.

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How is the Presidential Election conducted in Maldives?

Under the Election Laws of Maldives, the President is elected for a five-year term directly by the people by universal and secret suffrage.

The voting system for election of the President is a direct election through a majority vote with the first-past-the-post method.

The winning candidate has to secure a minimum of 50 % of total votes polled in one or multiple rounds.

How has been the India-Maldives relations in recent times?

Maldives has been a strong partner of India over the last few years. As India has been actively pursuing Neighborhood first policy, Maldives has been following an India-first approach.

India has proactively played the role of a first responder for Maldives during several crises including the 1988 coup, 2004 Tsunami and 2014 water crisis.

The relations between the two countries have been taken to a new high over the last few years with India helping Maldives through several developmental projects.

Apart from this, India has been involved in 47 High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP) of which 7 have been completed and inaugurated.

It is also noteworthy that the Indian Prime Minister had attended the inauguration ceremony of Maldives President Solih in 2018. However, the Maldives opposition under Abdulla Yameen's guidance has been vocal with their India Out Campaign.

13. Rice sowing area surpasses 400 lakh hectares marks

Source: The post is based on the article **“Rice sowing area surpasses 400 lakh hectares marks”** published in **PIB on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has released the progress of area coverage under kharif crops.

What are the key takeaways from the data on Kharif Crops?

The area under kharif or summer-sown crops which account for half of the country's annual food supply stands at 108.8 million hectares, nearly the same as 2022.

Rice dominates among the kharif crops with an area sown of 403.41 lakh hectares, surpassing last year's 392.81 lakh hectares. This indicates the significance of rice cultivation in India's agricultural landscape.

Pulses cultivation faced challenges but still covered 119.91 lakh hectares, slightly less than the 131.17 lakh hectares last year.

Coarse cereals like Jowar, Bajra, Ragi, Small millets and Maize maintained steady planting at 182.21 lakh hectares, compared to 181.24 lakh hectares last year.

Oilseeds, including Groundnut, Soybean, Sunflower, Sesamum, Niger, Castor, and others, covered 191.49 lakh hectares, slightly down from 193.30 lakh hectares last year.

Sugarcane cultivation expanded to 59.91 lakh hectares from 55.65 lakh hectares last year.

Jute and Mesta covered 6.57 lakh hectares (compared to 6.97 lakh hectares last year), while Cotton covered 125.00 lakh hectares (down from 126.87 lakh hectares last year).

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What is the significance of this data on Kharif Crops?

India's agriculture sector operates in three cropping seasons: Summer, Kharif, and Rabi.

Kharif crops are sown during June-July, dependent on monsoon rains, and typically harvested in October-November.

The progress in Kharif sowing, especially for essential crops like rice and sugarcane, reflects the resilience and dedication of Indian farmers, ensuring a robust agricultural sector in the country.

14. President of India to Inaugurate 'First Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights' at ICAR Convention Centre, NASC Complex, New Delhi

Source: The post is based on the article **"President of India to Inaugurate 'First Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights' at ICAR Convention Centre, NASC Complex, New Delhi"** published in **PIB on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

The President of India will inaugurate the first 'Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights' (GSFR) at the ICAR Convention Centre, National Agricultural Science Centre Complex in New Delhi.

What is the Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights'(GSFR)?

Organized by: Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (International Treaty) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Rome.

Hosted by: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in collaboration with Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPVFR) Authority, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) among others.

Aim: To contribute to the understanding of the challenges and opportunities of implementing farmers' rights by the signatory countries and other stakeholders.

Significance: India is hosting its first 'Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights'.

– **Note:** India has been the first country in the world to include Farmers' Rights in the context of Plant Variety Registration through its [Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights \(PPVFR\) Act, 2001](#).

15. India-UK hold 12th Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) in New Delhi

Source: The post is based on the article **"India-UK hold 12th Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) in New Delhi"** published in **PIB on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

The 12th Round of Ministerial India-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue was held in New Delhi.

What are the key highlights from 12th India-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue?

UK-India Infrastructure Financing Bridge Initiative: India and the UK have launched the UK-India Infrastructure Financing Bridge Initiative.

– The initiative is co-led by NITI Aayog and the City of London Corporation.

– The bridge aims to harness collective expertise in planning and implementing major infrastructure projects in India.

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Indian companies to list on exchanges overseas: The United Kingdom has received the first confirmation from India that it would explore the London Stock Exchange (LSE) for overseas direct listing of Indian companies.

– Under the current regulations, Indian firms are not allowed to list directly on overseas exchanges. They can only list on foreign exchanges through instruments, such as depository receipts.

[What is the UK-India Green Growth Equity Fund?](#)

[Click Here to read](#)

[16. CBI does not require permission to probe pre-2014 cases too: SC](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“CBI does not require permission to probe pre-2014 cases too: SC”** published in **The Hindu on 12th September 2023**

[What is the News?](#)

A Constitution Bench held that a Supreme Court judgment of 2014 which declared Section 6A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act invalid has a retrospective effect.

[What is Section 6A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment \(DSPE\) Act?](#)

Section 6A of the DSPE Act was added in 2003 through Section 26 of the Central Vigilance Commission Act (CVCA).

The section mandated the government's prior sanction to proceed in corruption cases against officers of the rank of joint secretary and above.

However, an exception provided in Section 6A(2) states that no approval is necessary for cases involving arrest of a person on the spot on the charge of accepting or attempting to accept a bribe.

In 2014, a five-judge Constitution Bench struck down Section 6A of the DSPE Act, ruling that status or position cannot shield an officer of the level of joint secretary and above from an unconstrained probe by the CBI in cases of corruption.

This court termed Section 6A a “discriminatory” provision that “impedes tracking down the corrupt senior bureaucrats”.

But the 2014 ruling did not clarify what would happen to existing cases being probed by the CBI

Therefore, a constitution bench was constituted to examine whether the 2014 decision would affect existing corruption cases.

[What did the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court rule?](#)

The main question before the constitution bench was related to the applicability of Section 6A in DSPE Act.

The constitution bench held that the Supreme Court's 2014 ruling which struck down Section 6A of the DSPE Act will apply retrospectively.

This means that there would be no protection to the public servants on the premise of a sanction under Section 6A in pre-2014 cases.

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17. IISc scientists develop novel approach to detect and kill cancer cells

Source: The post is based on the article “**IISc scientists develop novel approach to detect and kill cancer cells**” published in **The Hindu on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

Indian Institute of Science (IISc) scientists have developed a new approach to potentially detect and kill cancer cells.

What have scientists developed to detect and kill cancer cells?

Scientists have created hybrid nanoparticles made of gold and copper sulphide.

These hybrid nanoparticles have unique properties:

- **Kills Cancer cells:** These hybrid nanoparticles can create heat and release toxic oxygen when illuminated with light, effectively targeting and killing cancer cells.
- **Diagnose certain cancers:** These nanoparticles can help diagnose certain cancers. Existing methods such as standalone CT and MRI scans require trained radiology professionals to decipher the images.
- The photoacoustic property of the nanoparticles allows them to absorb light and generate ultrasound waves, which can be used to detect cancer cells with high contrast once the particles reach them.
- Scans created from the generated ultrasound waves can also provide better clarity and can be used to measure the oxygen saturation in the tumour, boosting their detection.

Size of these Hybrid Nanoparticles: The hybrid nanoparticles are less than 8 nm in size. They can potentially travel inside tissues easily and reach tumours.

- The researchers believe that the nanoparticles’ small size would also allow them to leave the human body naturally without accumulating.
- However, extensive studies need to be carried out to determine if they are safe to use inside the human body.
- In the current study, the researchers tested their nanoparticles on lung cancer and cervical cancer cell lines in the lab. They now plan to take the results forward for clinical development.

18. Indian Coast Guard participates in 19th Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM) in Istanbul, Türkiye

Source: The post is based on the article “**Indian Coast Guard participates in 19th Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM) in Istanbul, Türkiye**” published in **PIB on 11th September 2023**

What is the News?

Indian Coast Guard participated in the 19th Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM) at Istanbul, Türkiye.

What is the Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM)?

HACGAM is an **annual event** hosted by one of its member nations on a rotational basis.

It is an offshoot of the Japanese initiative to promote cooperation amongst regional Coast Guards, after the capture of the pirated vessel MV Alondra Rainbow by the Indian Coast Guard in Nov 1999.

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Aim: It focuses on fostering cooperation between the Coast Guards of the member Asian states to ensure and promote safe, secure, and clean seas in the region.

Groups: The forum comprises four Working Groups to enable a focused and goal-oriented approach towards coordinated response and synergy towards common maritime issues.

– The Indian Coast Guard chairs the search and rescue (SAR) working group.

Member countries: Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Philippines, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Japan, Republic of Korea, Laos, Maldives, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Türkiye and Vietnam.

– Further, Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia- Information Sharing Center(ReCAAP-ISC) participates in the forum as an associate member.

18th edition: In 2022, the 18th edition of the meeting was hosted by the ICG in New Delhi

19. African Union in G20: A look at the G20's latest member

Source: The post is based on the article “African Union in G20: A look at the G20's latest member” published in Indian Express on 12th September 2023

What is the News?

The African Union (AU) has been admitted as a new member of the G20.

This development took place at the ongoing 18th G20 Heads of State and Government Summit in New Delhi.

What is the African Union(AU)?

Launched in: 2002 (The grouping is the successor of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was formed in 1963)

Members: It is an intergovernmental organization of the 55 member states located on the continent of Africa.

Purpose: To build an Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens.

Secretariat: Addis Ababa.

Significance: Collectively the group has a gross domestic product (gdp) of \$3 trillion with some 1.4 billion people.

What are the objectives of the AU?

AU aims to unite African nations, accelerate the process of the political and socio-economic integration of the continent and address their social, economic and political challenges.

It also aims to promote peace, stability, security and human rights in the region.

What are the notable achievements of the AU?

Firstly, AU's peacekeeping missions have helped governments tackle terrorism across Africa, from the Sahel to northern Mozambique.

Secondly, AU's diplomatic efforts have also resulted in resolving conflicts in Africa. In 2022, it brokered a peace deal between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in South Africa.

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Thirdly, the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which came into force in 2021, is yet another achievement of the organization. With 54 member countries as signatories, AfCFTA is the world's largest new free trade area since the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994.

What have been the shortcomings of the AU?

Firstly, it has been unable to thwart coups in Africa. Since the 1960s, the continent has witnessed more than 200 coups – the most recent ones took place in Gabon and Niger.

Secondly, it has also been unable to get its member countries to pay their annual dues, leaving it starved of funds. As a result, it has to depend on external funding, which impacts its autonomy.

20. President of India to virtually launch Ayushman Bhav Campaign

Source: The post is based on the article “**President of India to virtually launch Ayushman Bhav Campaign**” published in **PIB on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

The President of India will launch the ‘Ayushman Bhav’ campaign.

What is the Ayushman Bhav campaign?

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Purpose: It is a comprehensive nationwide healthcare initiative that aims to extend healthcare coverage to every village and town transcending geographical barriers and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Collaboration between: The campaign is a collaborative effort involving gram panchayats, the Department of Health, various government departments, and local elected bodies in both rural and urban areas.

Components: The campaign aims to extend comprehensive coverage of health services through its three components:

– **Ayushman Apke Dwar 3.0:** This initiative aims to provide Ayushman cards to remaining eligible beneficiaries enrolled under the PM-JAY scheme, ensuring that more individuals have access to essential health services.

– **Ayushman Melas at HWCs and CHCs:** These Melas at Ayushman Bharat- HWCs and CHCs will facilitate the creation of ABHA IDs (Health IDs) and issuance of Ayushman Bharat Cards. They will also offer early diagnosis, comprehensive primary health care services, tele consultation with specialists, and appropriate referrals.

– **Ayushman Sabhas:** These gatherings in every village and Panchayat will play a pivotal role in distributing Ayushman cards, generating ABHA IDs, and raising awareness about vital health schemes and disease conditions such as non-communicable diseases, tuberculosis (Nikshay Mitra), sickle cell disease as well as blood donation and organ donation drives.

Recognition: Panchayats that successfully extend comprehensive coverage of health services will earn the prestigious title of ‘Ayushman Gram Panchayat’ or ‘Ayushman Urban Ward,’ symbolizing their dedication to equitable healthcare provision.

Significance: Ayushman Bhav campaign is aligned with the vision of creating ‘Healthy Villages’ and ‘Healthy Gram Panchayats,’ laying the foundation for achieving Universal Health Coverage in the country.

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21. Union Minister extends invitation for an Indo Russian Workshop on Eastern Maritime Corridor in Chennai

Source: The post is based on the article “**Union Minister extends invitation for an Indo Russian Workshop on Eastern Maritime Corridor in Chennai**” published in **PIB on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways has extended an invitation to Russia for an Indo Russian Workshop on Eastern Maritime Corridor(EMC).

What is the Eastern Maritime Corridor?



The Eastern Maritime Corridor is a proposed sea route between the Indian port city of Chennai and the key Russian port Vladivostok.

The route passes through the Sea of Japan, the South China Sea and Malacca Strait.

This maritime corridor is part of the vision to address the current lack of connectivity between India and Russia.

What are the expected benefits for India from this Eastern Maritime Corridor?

Reduce Time: This sea route is estimated to reduce the time required to transport cargo between Indian and Russian Ports of Far-East Region by up to 16 days, i.e., 24 days in comparison to over 40 days currently taken to transport goods from India to Far East Russia via Europe.

– Present trade route between Mumbai in India and St Petersburg in Russia covers a distance of 8,675 nautical miles which takes approximately 35 to 40 days.

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Presence in South East Asian region: The new route would give India the largest presence in the South East Asian region. The strategic location of Chennai Port on the Bay of Bengal makes it an ideal gateway for trade with Southeast Asian countries like Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

Access to Russia's Far East Region: The Port of Vladivostok in Russia provides access to the resource-rich Far East region, offering immense opportunities for Indian businesses to tap into the market sectors like energy, mining, and technology.

22. IICA and UNICEF jointly organize workshop on Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting(BRSR)

Source: The post is based on the article **“IICA and UNICEF jointly organize workshop on Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting(BRSR)”** published in **PIB on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs(IICA) has organized a workshop on Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting(BRSR) in collaboration with UNICEF and National Stock Exchange.

What is the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) framework?

The Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) framework was introduced by SEBI in 2021.

The framework is a mandatory disclosure mechanism for top 1000 listed companies or businesses to report their performance on environmental, social and governance (ESG) aspects and demonstrate their commitment to responsible business practices.

The framework is based on the nine principles of the National Guidelines for Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC) which are:



Source: Deloitte

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What are the strengths of BRSR Framework?

Firstly, it provides a comprehensive framework covering a wide range of sustainability topics, including governance, ethics, social responsibility, environmental performance, and economic performance. This enables Indian companies to report on sustainability in a holistic manner.

Secondly, its alignment with global standards simplifies sustainability reporting for Indian companies to international stakeholders, who show increasing interest in sustainability performance.

Thirdly, being mandatory for the top 1,000 listed companies ensures a uniform standard, ultimately improving sustainability reporting across India.

What are the weaknesses of BRSR Framework?

Firstly, BRSR can be complex and challenging to implement due to numerous requirements, making it difficult for companies to identify relevant ones.

Secondly, reporting requirements may lack clarity, leading to inconsistencies in reporting, mainly because the framework is relatively new and lacks sufficient implementation guidance.

What are the improvements needed to the BRSR Framework?

Firstly, simplification and ease of implementation can be achieved by reducing requirements and offering clearer reporting guidelines and implementation support.

Secondly, enhancing clarity through more examples of reporting on various sustainability topics would benefit companies.

Lastly, expanding the framework to encompass additional sustainability topics like human rights and labor practices would enhance its comprehensiveness.

23. Maritime information sharing workshop 2023

Source: The post is based on the article “**Maritime information sharing workshop 2023**” published in **PIB on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

India will be hosting the three-day Maritime Information Sharing Workshop 2023 (MISW 23).

What is Maritime Information Sharing Workshop 2023 (MISW 23)?

Hosted by: Gurugram-based Indian Navy’s Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR).

Aim: To bolster collaboration, cooperation and information sharing among partner countries for a safer, peaceful, and prosperous Indian Ocean Region.

Theme: “Advancing Maritime Security for a Sustainable Future”

Participating countries: 31 countries are participating in the workshop.

Note: These 31 countries are of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and signatories to the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA).

What is the Djibouti Code of Conduct(DCOC)?

Djibouti Code of Conduct(DCOC) was established in 2009. It is a grouping on maritime matters aimed at repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Western Indian Ocean Region, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.

India has joined the Djibouti Code of Conduct as Observer in 2020.

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24. Transport Minister mentions tax on diesel vehicles: Why is diesel under pressure?

Source: The post is based on the article “**Transport Minister mentions tax on diesel vehicles: Why is diesel under pressure?**” published in **Indian Express on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Road Transport Minister has suggested that people should shift away from using petrol and diesel fuels.

He mentioned that if the usage of diesel-powered vehicles continues, he might propose to the Finance Minister the imposition of an additional 10% GST on these vehicles as a “pollution tax”.

Note: Government already **imposes a 28% tax on diesel cars**, plus an additional cess depending on the engine capacity, taking the total tax to almost 50%.

– A committee appointed by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas **recommended a ban on diesel four-wheel vehicles by 2027** in cities with a population of more than 1 million.

How much percentage of India’s transport vehicles use diesel?

Diesel accounts for about 40% of India’s petroleum products consumption.

Around 87% of total diesel sales are to the transport segment, with trucks and buses accounting for about 68% of diesel sales in the country.

Three states — Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Haryana — account for almost 40% of the diesel sold in India.

In the car’s segment, the contribution of diesel demand has fallen to 16.5% from 28.5% in 2013.

Why have carmakers started to move away from diesel?

Firstly, the higher compression ratio of diesel engines means increased emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NOx), which is one of the main drawbacks of diesel engines versus petrol.

Secondly, carmakers like Maruti Suzuki have decided to exit the diesel segment due to the introduction of the new BS-VI emission norms from April 1, 2020. The cost of upgrading diesel engines to meet these stricter standards was prohibitively high.

– Car manufacturers argued that the government’s decision to skip from BS-IV to BS-VI made it economically unviable to continue offering diesel engines in their portfolio.

What is the reason an individual user might prefer diesel to petrol?

Firstly, higher fuel economy of diesel engines compared to petrol is a factor. Diesel has greater energy content per litre and diesel engines are inherently efficient. Diesel engines do not use high-voltage spark ignition (spark plugs) and use less fuel per kilometer as they have higher compression ratios. This makes diesel the fuel of choice for heavy vehicles.

Secondly, diesel engines offer more torque (rotational or turning force), and are less likely to stall as they are controlled by a mechanical or electronic governor, thereby proving to be better for haulage.

Thirdly, for individual car owners, the cost of running a vehicle is a crucial factor. In India, diesel-powered cars were highly popular for nearly a decade with diesel cars making up 48% of passenger vehicle sales in 2013.

— This popularity was largely due to the significantly lower price of diesel compared to petrol, with a substantial price difference, at its peak of Rs 25 per litre.

– However, the situation changed when fuel prices were deregulated in late 2014. The price difference between diesel and petrol has since narrowed to around Rs 7 per litre, the closest they have been in price since 1991.

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— As a result, diesel cars accounted for less than 20% of overall passenger vehicle sales in the fiscal year 2021-22.

25. Nipah kills two in Kerala: What is this virus, why is it dangerous even though it doesn't spread fast

Source: The post is based on the article “**Nipah kills two in Kerala: What is this virus, why is it dangerous even though it doesn't spread fast**” published in **Indian Express on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

Cases of Nipah Virus have been found in Kerala again after two people were confirmed to have died of the viral disease in Kozhikode district, Kerala.

What is Nipah Virus?

Nipah is a zoonotic disease, which means it is transmitted to humans through infected animals or contaminated food.

It can also be transmitted directly from person to person through close contact with an infected person.

First case: The first outbreaks of the Nipah virus among humans was reported from Malaysia (1998) and Singapore (1999).

– The virus takes its name from the village in Malaysia where the person in whom the virus was first isolated died of the disease.

Host reservoir: The animal host reservoir for this virus is known to be the fruit bat, commonly known as flying fox.

– Fruit bats are known to transmit this virus to other animals like pigs, and also dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep.

Transmission: Humans get infected mainly through direct contact with these animals, or through consumption of food contaminated by saliva or urine of these infected animals. Human-to-human transmission is also considered possible.

Symptoms: Fever, headache, cough, sore throat, difficulty in breathing, and vomiting. In severe cases, disorientation, drowsiness, seizures, encephalitis (swelling of the brain) can occur, progressing to coma and death.

Treatment: There is no treatment or vaccine available for either people or animals. The primary treatment for humans is supportive care.

Fatality rate: The Nipah virus is known to spread far more slowly than Covid-19. However, it is its ability to kill that is the biggest concern.

– According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the overall global case fatality rate of Nipah is estimated at 40% to 75% .

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26. Salem sago gets GI tag

Source: The post is based on the article “**Salem sago gets GI tag**” published in **The Hindu on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

Salem Starch and Sago Manufacturers Service Industrial Cooperative Society Ltd. (SAGOSERVE) from Tamil Nadu has received a Geographical Indication(GI) Tag for **Salem sago**.

What is Salem sago?



Source: The Hindu

Sago is derived from raw tapioca. It is in the form of small hard globules or pearls and is pearl white in colour.

It is produced in Salem district in Tamil Nadu which is the main center for sago production in the country.

It is manufactured from the wet starch powder crushed from tapioca roots. The wet starch powder is used for producing sago and the dry powder has been used as a raw material for industrial purposes.

Sago is used in various industries, including food, paper, construction, textile, cosmetic, pharmaceutical, mining, and alcohol, among others.

What is Tapioca?

Tapioca is a starchy food derived from the cassava root. In India, tapioca pearls are referred to as “Sabudana”.

Climate and Soil: Any well drained soil preferably red lateritic loam with a pH range of 5.5 -7.0 is best suited for tapioca cultivation.

– It thrives best in tropical, warm humid climate with well distributed rainfall of over 100 cm per annum. This crop can be cultivated upto an elevation of 1000 m.

Origin: Tapioca originated in South America and was later introduced to India.

– In India, tapioca is predominantly cultivated in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh.

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27. Petition for counting all VVPAT slips during elections: What the Election Commission, activists argue

Source: The post is based on the article “**Petition for counting all VVPAT slips during elections: What the Election Commission, activists argue**” published in **Indian Express on 13th September 2023**

What is the News?

A petition has been filed by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) in the Supreme Court. It has sought 100% counting of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips.

What is Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)?

VVPAT is a ballotless system connected with the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM). It prints a paper slip when a voter casts his/her vote on the EVM against the candidate's name and the symbol of the party he/she is standing for.

As soon as the voter presses the button on the EVM, the VVPAT machine prints the slip that contains the name and symbol of the party they have voted for, for around 7 seconds.

The machine also has a transparent window where a voter can see the printed slip. After this, the slip goes inside a sealed box of the machine.

Hence, VVPAT essentially acts as a verification machine for a voter to ensure that the vote has been taken into account for which he or she has voted.

When was VVPAT first introduced?

The VVPAT was used for the first time in all 21 polling stations of the Noksen Assembly constituency of Nagaland in 2013, after which the EC decided to introduce VVPATs in a phased manner.

From June 2017, 100% of VVPATs began to be used in polls, and the 2019 Lok Sabha elections became the first general election to have 100% of EVMs being attached to VVPATs.

What percentage of VVPAT slips are counted as of now?

In 2018, the EC mandated the counting of VVPAT slips of one randomly selected polling station per Assembly constituency.

This was increased to five polling stations per Assembly seat, following a Supreme Court judgment in 2019.

What is the present petition demanding?

The present petition by ADR has asked the court to declare every voter has the fundamental right to ensure that their vote has been accurately recorded.

They argue that the current practice of displaying the VVPAT slip for seven seconds does not guarantee this and they are seeking a 100% counting of VVPAT slips to fulfill the Supreme Court's 2013 judgment in **Subramanian Swamy vs. Election Commission of India**, where it held the VVPAT is an indispensable requirement of free and fair elections.

What did the EC say about this?

EC said the VVPAT was “essentially an audit trail” so the voter could verify the vote at that instant but following Supreme Court orders, the slips were being tallied on a “statistically robust basis”.

Hence, going for 100% counting of VVPAT slips in every election would mean we are going back to the time of manual polling. This would be tantamount to the re-introduction of paper ballots by indirect means.

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Moreover, preparations for the upcoming General Election to the Lok Sabha had already begun, and any last-minute changes to the verification process would pose significant technical and logistical challenges.

28. Behind Libya's catastrophic flooding: Extreme weather, vulnerable geography, and crumbling infrastructure

Source: The post is based on the article “**Behind Libya's catastrophic flooding: Extreme weather, vulnerable geography, and crumbling infrastructure**” published in **Indian Express on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

More than 5,000 people have died and thousands more are missing after devastating floods swept through the Libyan port city of Derna.

Where is Derna?

Derna is a port city in eastern Libya. It lies on a narrow coastal plain on the Mediterranean under steep mountains running along the coast.

What factors contributed to the devastating floods in Libya's eastern region Derna?

Extreme Weather: The flooding occurred due to exceptional rainfall. For instance, Al-Bayda and Derna, typically receiving minimal rain, experienced a record-breaking rain.

– This extreme weather was caused by Storm Daniel, also known as Cyclone Daniel, originating in Greece. As it moved across the Mediterranean Sea, it transitioned into a “medicane,” gaining strength from abnormally warm sea surface temperatures.

– Higher temperatures, likely a consequence of global warming, intensified the storm, resulting in more powerful winds and heavier rainfall.

Vulnerable Geography: Derna, a coastal city with approximately 1 lakh inhabitants suffered the most destruction.

– The city's location at the end of a valley and bisected by the Wadi Derna, a seasonal river typically protected by dams, made it susceptible to flooding.

– Cyclone Daniel's impact caused the collapse of dams outside the city, leading to flash floods down Wadi Derna that inundated the city.

Crumbling Infrastructure: The collapse of the dams highlighted Libya's dilapidated infrastructure, worsened by a decade-long conflict between rival factions.

– Political turmoil shifted focus away from maintaining and developing critical infrastructure, including dams, desalination plants, electrical grids, and roads. Neglect of infrastructure throughout the country left it in disrepair.

– Libya's lack of flood-resilient structures, roads, and early-warning systems further exacerbated the catastrophe as flooding is rare in the region.

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29. Government of India and World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) Collaborate to Strengthen One Health Approach for Pandemic Preparedness

Source: The post is based on the article “**Government of India and World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) Collaborate to Strengthen One Health Approach for Pandemic Preparedness**” published in **PIB on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying in partnership with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) has organized a multi-sectoral workshop “Risk-based management of spillover events in wildlife in India” at Hyderabad.

What is One Health approach?

One Health is an approach to designing and implementing programmes, policies, legislation and research in which multiple sectors communicate and work together to achieve better public health outcomes.

The One Health approach is critical to addressing health threats in the animal-human-environment interface.

The areas of work in which a One Health approach is particularly relevant include: food safety, control of zoonotic diseases, laboratory services, neglected tropical diseases, environmental health and antimicrobial resistance.

WHO is a member of the One Health Quadripartite along with the Food and Agriculture Organization, World Organisation for Animal Health and United Nations Environment Programme.

The 4 organizations work together to promote multi-sectoral responses to public health threats originating in the animal-human-environment interface and to provide technical advice on how to reduce these risks.

What are the initiatives taken by India on One Health approach?

Standing Committee on Zoonoses: It was established in 2006 under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). The purpose of this committee was to provide the Union and the State governments guidance and recommendations on challenges related to zoonoses.

Consortium on One Health: The Department of Biotechnology launched India’s first consortium on One Health in October 2021. It brings together 27 organizations from several ministries and plans to assess the burden of five transboundary animal diseases and 10 select zoonotic diseases.

One Health pilot project: In 2022, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairy (DAHD) – in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Confederation of Indian Industry has launched One Health pilot project in Karnataka and Uttarakhand.

– This initiative intends to strengthen intersectoral collaborations through capacity-building, with the goal of improving livestock health, human health, wildlife health, and environmental health.

India is also currently preparing for a wider ‘National One Health Mission’ to be spearheaded by the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor. The idea behind this mission is to coordinate, support, and integrate all existing One Health initiatives in the country.

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Transfer of personal data under UN treaty will be under domestic laws: India

Source: The post is based on the article **“Transfer of personal data under UN treaty will be under domestic laws: India”** published in **The Hindu on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

United Nations member states are negotiating the UN Cybercrime Convention to counter cybercrimes.

This convention has been under negotiation for three years and is expected to be ratified at the UN General Assembly in 2024.

What is India’s stand on the negotiations on the UN Cybercrime Convention?

Firstly, India has proposed changes in provisions related to the transfer of “personal data” in the Draft UN Cybercrime Convention.

They suggested that the transfer of personal data under the convention should be governed by domestic laws rather than other international laws.

– **Note:** India’s Digital Personal Data Protection Act says that personal data can be processed “in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India or security of the state” for “fulfilling any obligation under law”.

The Act requires firms to disclose to users the identity of other firms to which their data would be entrusted for processing, but they are explicitly exempted from disclosing or sharing of such data in the case of lawful interception of data.

Secondly, India has asked for the deletion of a clause encouraging state parties to establish bilateral or multilateral arrangements to facilitate the transfer of personal data.

Thirdly, India has agreed to the clause in the convention that state parties may transfer personal data to a third country only with the prior written authorisation of the original transferring state party.

30. Fourth G20 Global Partnership For Financial Inclusion Meeting is scheduled to be held in Mumbai

Source: The post is based on the article **“Fourth G20 Global Partnership For Financial Inclusion Meeting is scheduled to be held in Mumbai”** published in **PIB on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Fourth G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI) Meeting is being held in Mumbai

What is Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion(GPFI)?

Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion(GPFI) was officially launched in 2010 in Seoul, South Korea.

It is an inclusive platform for all G20 countries, interested non-G20 countries and relevant stakeholders.

Purpose: To carry forward work on financial inclusion, including implementation of the G20 Financial Inclusion Action Plan, endorsed at the G20 Summit in Seoul.

GPFI’s efforts include helping countries put into practice the G20 Principles for Innovative Financial Inclusion, strengthening data for measuring financial inclusion, and developing methodologies for countries wishing to set targets.

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The first G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPII) meeting under India's G20 Presidency was held in 2023 in Kolkata, West Bengal.

31. For sickle cell patients, an elusive disability certificate

Source: The post is based on the article **"For sickle cell patients, an elusive disability certificate"** published in **The Hindu on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union government has been publicizing its campaign to 'eradicate' sickle-cell disease by 2047.

But there are some issues the government is facing in the issuance of disability certificates to sickle-cell disease (SCD) patients.

What is Sickle-cell disease(SCD)?

[Click Here to read](#)

What are the issues the government is facing in issuance of Disability certificates to sickle-cell disease patients?

Delay in issuance of Disability certificates: The Indian government has been delaying the issue of permanent disability certificates to individuals with sickle-cell disease (SCD) aged five and above.

– This issue has been stuck in three different Union Ministries for nearly three years. The Health Ministry is responsible for setting the criteria, the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry issues the certificates and the Tribal Affairs Ministry is keen on ensuring certificates for those suffering from chronic anemia and SCD-related complications.

Duration of Disability certificates: Sickle cell disease was added to the list of disabilities under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. At that time, patients could only get disability certificates with a one-year validity.

– However, patients complained about the cumbersome procedure for renewal of the certificates. Eventually, the validity of the certificates was increased to three years.

– But now there is a demand for the need for permanent disability certificates because of the progressive nature of the disease.

32. IAF chief takes delivery of first C-295 transport aircraft in Spain

Source: The post is based on the article **"IAF chief takes delivery of first C-295 transport aircraft in Spain"** published in **The Hindu on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

Indian Air Force(IAF) has received the first C-295 MW transport aircraft from Airbus.

What is a C-295 MW aircraft?

C-295 is a new-generation tactical airlifter in the light and medium segment.

The aircraft will replace the ageing Avro aircraft of the Indian Air Force.

It has been designed and built by Airbus, a European multinational aerospace corporation.

Key Features:

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C-295 is capable of carrying up to nine tonnes of payload or as many as 71 troops at a maximum cruise speed of about 480 kilometre.

The aircraft can also be used for air-to-air refuelling of choppers and fixed-wing aircraft.

It can operate from short, soft, rough and unprepared airstrips unlike the Avro.

Besides essentially being a transport aircraft, it can also be modified for intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance with a multi-mission radar that can be weaponized to conduct effective close air support operations.

India-Airbus deal for C295 aircraft:

In 2021, India signed a deal with Airbus Defence and Space to procure 56 C295 aircraft.

Under the agreement, Airbus will deliver the first 16 aircraft in 'fly-away' condition from its final assembly line in Seville, Spain within four years and the subsequent 40 aircraft will be manufactured by Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) in India as part of an industrial partnership between the two companies.

Significance: It is the first project of its kind in which a military aircraft will be manufactured in India by a private company. It is also the first time that the C295 aircraft will be manufactured outside of Europe.

33. Cabinet approves eCourts Phase III for 4 years

Source: The post is based on the article **"Cabinet approves eCourts Phase III for 4 years"** published in **PIB on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the eCourts Project Phase III.

What is eCourts Project?

[Click Here to read](#)

Phase I of the project was implemented during 2011-2015.

Phase II of the project started in 2015 under which 18,735 District & Subordinate courts have been computerized so far.

What is the aim of eCourts Project Phase III?

Type: Central Sector Scheme

Aim: To create a unified technology platform for the judiciary which will provide a seamless and paperless interface between courts, litigants, and other stakeholders.

Duration: Four Years (2023 onwards)

Key Features of the project: Phase 3 of the eCourts project will see:

Digitisation of entire court records, both legacy and pending cases.

A tripartite agreement will be signed between State governments, the Centre and the 25 High Courts under which maintenance, upkeep, and replacement of equipment will be the responsibility of respective States while the funds and the required hardware will be provided by the Centre.

Establishment and expanding the scope of virtual courts for hearing of cases by creating a robust digital infrastructure.

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Integration of duty holders such as courts, jails, police stations, and forensic laboratories with the InterOperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS).

Add Artificial Intelligence into the judicial system and introduce features like Optical Character Recognition (OCR) for analysis of case pendency and forecasting future litigation as well.

Citizens who do not have access to technology can access judicial services from eSewa Kendras, thus bridging the digital divide.

What are the expected benefits of eCourts Project Phase III?

Judicial processes will become more environment-friendly by minimizing paper-based filings and reducing the physical movement of documents.

Virtual participation in the court proceedings will help in reducing costs associated with court proceedings such as travel expenses for witnesses, judges, and other stakeholders.

Expansion of eFiling will reduce the time and effort required to file documents thereby minimizing human errors.

Enhanced accuracy and transparency in court proceedings

34. Konark Wheel replica serves as backdrop of PM welcome handshake with G20 leaders

Source: The post is based on the article “**Konark Wheel replica serves as backdrop of PM welcome handshake with G20 leaders**” published in **Hindu Business Line** on **12th September 2023**

What is the News?

A replica of the Konark Wheel from the Konark Sun temple in Odisha served as the backdrop of the Prime Minister’s welcome handshake with G20 leaders as they arrived at Bharat Mandapam.

What is the Konark Wheel?



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Konark Wheel was built during the 13th century under the reign of **King Narasimhadeva-I** of the Ganga dynasty.

The wheel with 24 spokes is also **adapted into India's national flag** and embodies ancient wisdom, advanced civilization, and architectural excellence.

The rotating motion of the wheel **symbolizes time or the Kalachakra** as well as progress and continuous change in the universe.

As a symbol of the wheel of democracy, it reflects the resilience of democratic ideals, and commitment to progress in society.

Konark Wheel sculpture is **featured on the recent Rs 10 currency notes**. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced the Rs 10 currency note in 2018. It showcases a profile portrait of Mahatma Gandhi on the front, while the reverse side highlights the exquisitely carved Konark wheel.

What is Konark Sun Temple?

[Click Here to read](#)

35. What are essential components of 'National Strategy for Robotics'?

Source: The post is based on the article **"What are essential components of 'National Strategy for Robotics'?"** published in **Business Standard on 12th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has invited public comments as well as inputs from stakeholders on the draft "National Strategy for Robotics (NSR)".

Note: According to the World Robotics Report 2022, India ranks 10th globally in terms of annual industrial installations of robots.

What is the Draft National Strategy for Robotics (NSR)?

Aim: To strengthen all pillars in the innovation cycle of robotic technology, while also providing a robust institutional framework for ensuring the effective implementation of these interventions.

Objectives: To make India a global robotics leader by 2030.

– To build upon the mandates of the Make in India 2.0 plans, which identify robotics as one of the 27 sub-sectors to further enhance India's integration in the global value chain.

Nodal Agency: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) will serve as the nodal agency for robotics, overseeing the NSR through the 'National Robotics Mission' (NRM).

Core sectors: The strategy has identified manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, and national security as the four core sectors to prioritize robotics automation.

Measures: The strategy proposes fiscal and non-fiscal interventions by the NRM for upscaling innovation in robotics. These interventions will be specifically aimed at developing funding mechanisms for robotics start-ups as well as promoting exports.

Major recommendations:

– Create a strong regulatory framework led by the Robotics Innovation Unit (RIU) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

– Establish Centers of Excellence (CoEs) in Robotics for both foundational and applied research. Encourage private sector involvement in priority sectors for experimental prototyping and initial commercialization.

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– Provide support to startups, leverage research potential in higher education institutions, and develop dedicated robotics industrial zones.

– Initially, the central government should be a major buyer of Indian-made robotic systems. This can be achieved through a Public Procurement Policy for Robotics, which incentivizes domestic production by giving preference to suppliers with a minimum local content requirement.

What are the main challenges in India's robotics sector?

Import Dependence: India relies heavily on importing robotics components, mainly from China and Japan.

Expensive Hardware: The cost of robotics hardware components is high.

Limited Research and Development: Insufficient investments in research and development hinder progress.

36. SC data now onboard National Judicial Data Grid portal: CJI

Source: The post is based on the article “**SC data now onboard National Judicial Data Grid portal: CJI**” published in **Indian Express on 15th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Chief Justice of India has announced that the Supreme Court is now “onboard” the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) Portal.

What is the National Judicial Data Grid(NJDG) Portal?

National Judicial Data Grid(NJDG) is a national repository of data relating to cases instituted, pending and disposed of by the courts across the country.

The portal contains a database of orders, judgments and case details of 18,735 District and subordinate Courts and High Courts.

Its key feature is that the data is updated in real-time and has granular data up to the Taluka level.

Developed by: National Informatics Centre (NIC) in close coordination with the in-house software development team of the Computer Cell, Registry of the Supreme Court with an interactive interface and analytics dashboard.

The portal was built as part of Phase II of the **e-Courts project** which is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

How does the NJDG Portal help?

Firstly, NJDG works as a monitoring tool to identify, manage & reduce pendency of cases.

– Take, for instance, the Supreme Court data. For the year 2023, the total pendency of registered cases in SC is 64,854. But the Cases instituted last month were 5,412 while cases disposed of in the last month were 5,033.

– This shows that the pendency in SC is largely due to legacy cases since the Court is currently disposing of approximately the same number of cases filed on an annual basis.

Secondly, it helps identify specific bottlenecks in judicial processes. For example, if the number of land disputes in a particular state shoots up, it helps policymakers look into whether the law needs to be strengthened.

Thirdly, it helps generate inputs related to particular areas of law. For example, to track cases related to land disputes, Land Records data of 26 States have been linked with NJDG.

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37. India marks one year of launch of National Logistics Policy

Source: The post is based on the article “**India marks one year of launch of National Logistics Policy**” published in **PIB on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

India has marked one year of the National Logistics Policy on September 17, 2023.

This policy complements the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (NMP) ,

What is the National Logistics Policy?

Aim: To drive economic growth and business competitiveness of the country through an integrated, seamless, efficient, reliable, green, sustainable and cost-effective logistics network by leveraging best in class technology, processes and skilled manpower.

Targets: (1) Reduce cost of logistics in India (2) improve the Logistics Performance Index ranking – endeavor is to be among top 25 countries by 2030 and (3) create data driven decision support mechanism for an efficient logistics ecosystem.

Action Plan: To achieve these targets, a **Comprehensive Logistics Action Plan (CLAP)** was launched covering eight action areas.

– These eight areas include: (1) Integrated Digital Logistics Systems; (2) Standardization of Physical Assets and Benchmarking of Service Quality Standards; (3) Logistics Human Resource Development and Capacity Building; (4) State engagement; (5) EXIM Logistics; (6) Services Improvement Framework; (7) Sectoral Plans for Efficient Logistics (SPEL) and (8) Facilitation of Development of Logistics Parks.

What is the progress on the implementation of the National Logistics Policy?

Unified Logistics Interface Platform(ULIP)

Logistics Data Bank (LDB): It is an application that tracks and traces EXIM cargo. It brings greater predictability, transparency and reliability, logistics cost will come down and wastages in supply chain will reduce.

Logistics Performance Index 2023

State Logistics Policy: To bring **holistic focus on ‘logistics’** in public policy at State level, States/UTs are developing State Logistics Plans (SLPs) aligned with NLP. So far, **22 States** have notified their respective State Logistics policies.

38. Bharat becomes the 13th country in world that can issue Internationally Accepted OIML (International Organization of Legal Metrology) Certificates

Source: The post is based on the article “**Bharat becomes the 13th country in world that can issue Internationally Accepted OIML (International Organization of Legal Metrology) Certificates**” published in **PIB on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Consumer Affairs Ministry has announced that India can now issue International Organisation of Legal Metrology (OIML) certificates which are accepted globally.

India has now become the 13th country that can issue such certificates.

What is the International Organization of Legal Metrology(OIML)?

OIML is an intergovernmental organisation created in 1955.

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It is an international standard-setting body. It develops model regulations, standards and related documents for use by legal metrology authorities and industry.

It plays a crucial role in harmonising national laws and regulations on the performance of measuring instruments like clinical thermometers, alcohol breath analysers, radar speed measuring instruments, ship tanks found at ports and petrol dispensing units.

Members: It has 63 Member States and 64 Corresponding Members. India became its member in 1956.

Headquarters: Paris, France

Why is the OIML certificate important?

An OIML Pattern Approval certificate is mandatory to sell a weight or measure in the international market which India can now issue.

This will help domestic manufacturers as they can export their weighing and measuring instruments worldwide without incurring additional testing fees, resulting in significant cost savings.

Significance: India has now become the 13th country that can issue OIML certificates. The other countries include Australia, Switzerland, China, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, France, United Kingdom, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden and Slovakia.

39. 4th G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group Meeting concludes in Varanasi with finalization of the G20 Sustainable Finance Report, 2023

Source: The post is based on the article “4th G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group Meeting concludes in Varanasi with finalization of the G20 Sustainable Finance Report, 2023” published in **PIB on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

The fourth and last meeting of the G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG) under India's G20 presidency began in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

What is the G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG)?

Background: It was launched in 2016 during China's G20 presidency as Green Finance Study Group.

– In 2018, under the Argentinian Presidency, its scope was expanded and the group was renamed Sustainable Finance Study Group (SFSG).

– In 2021, G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors agreed to upgrade it into the G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG).

Aim: To mobilize sustainable finance to help ensure global growth and stability, and promote the transition towards greener, more resilient and inclusive societies and economies.

Purpose: To advance international work to help scale up private and public sustainable finance and in doing so, accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

What is the work done by SFWG during India's G20 presidency?

The SFWG during India's G20 presidency has made recommendations on the following six areas: (1) Mechanisms for Mobilization of Timely and Adequate Resources for Climate Finance; (2) Policy Measures and Financial Instruments for Catalyzing the Rapid Development and Deployment of Green and Low-Carbon Technologies; (3) Scaling-up the adoption of social impact investment

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instruments; (4) Improving Nature-related Data and Reporting; (5) G20 Technical Assistance Action Plan; (6) Overcoming data-related barriers to climate investments.

G20 New Delhi Leader's Declaration 2023 has welcomed the work undertaken by the SFWG under India's G20 presidency.

40. All reported births, deaths to be digitally registered from Oct. 1

Source: The post is based on the article **"All reported births, deaths to be digitally registered from Oct. 1"** published in **The Hindu on 15th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023 will come into effect from October 1, 2023.

This means from October 1st, birth certificates will become a single-point document for citizens to avail a host of services including admission to educational institutions, marriage registration, issuance of drivers' license, appointment to a government job among other purposes.

What is the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023?

The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023 amends the 1969 Act.

The Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 provides for the regulation and registration of births and deaths.

The registration of births and deaths falls under the Concurrent List, giving powers to both Parliament and state legislatures to make laws on the subject.

Key Provisions of the Act:

The act introduces the concept of digital birth certificates. This will be a single document to be used for admission to educational institutions, applications for driving license, government jobs, passports or Aadhaar, voter enrolment and registration of marriage and others.

The act makes it compulsory for the States to register births and deaths on the Centre's Civil Registration System (CRS) portal and share data with the RGI which functions under the Union Home Ministry.

The Act authorizes the government to collect Aadhaar numbers of parents and informants, if available, in case of birth registration.

[Click Here to read more](#)

41. 55th Network Planning Group Meeting under PM GatiShakti recommends six infrastructure projects

Source: The post is based on the article **"55th Network Planning Group Meeting under PM GatiShakti recommends six infrastructure projects"** published in **PIB on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

The 55th [Network Planning Group \(NPG\)](#) under PM Gati Shakti has recommended several projects.

What are the projects recommended by the Network Planning Group(NPG)?

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Dhubri bridge – Goeragre road project: It is located in State of Meghalaya and shall connect under-construction 4-lane Dhubri-Phulbari bridge connecting East-West Road Corridor.

– This is a part of the Government initiative to connect the North-Eastern part of the country with easy connectivity.

– This project will not only benefit the agro-products transportation but also facilitate international trade at the India-Bangladesh border region.

Kharagpur- Moregram road project: It is part of Kharagpur Siliguri Road Corridor. The project shall reduce the overall distance between Kharagpur to Siliguri by 112 km and travel time by upto 7 hrs.

– The project will not only benefit aspirational districts enroute but also Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts of Paschim Medinipur.

– The project will help in overall socio-economic upliftment of the region. The road will also benefit international trade via Haldia/Kolkata Port.

Railway Line Projects: Three railway line projects have been approved. One Greenfield railway line project alignment passes through West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand while another Greenfield railway line is located in Odisha which will be an alternate and shorter alignment to existing railway line and shall help in decongestion of existing track. The third railway line is located in Gujarat State.

– These railway lines are expected to benefit the Steel, Cement and Power industries by easing the transportation of Coal, Limestone, Iron Ore and finished products, such as Iron & Steel, Cement etc apart from benefitting the passenger transportation.

42. Nyoma airfield in eastern Ladakh to be a game changer for armed forces: Defence Minister

Source: The post is based on the article **“Nyoma airfield in eastern Ladakh to be a game changer for armed forces: Defence Minister”** published in **Hindustan Times** on **14th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) will be starting the construction of India's highest fighter airfield in Nyoma, a village in Ladakh

Where is Nyoma?



Source: Swarajya

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The Nyoma village is located in Eastern Ladakh. It is close to the south Bank of Pangong Tso at an altitude of about 13,700 feet.

Nyoma is around 46 kilometers from the Line of Actual Control with China.

Current status: Nyoma currently operates as an Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) which means the runway is made of mud allowing only specialized transport aircraft such as the C-130J and helicopters to land.

Significance of construction of the Nyoma airfield:

The construction of the Nyoma airfield will not only enable the seamless operation of heavier transport aircraft but also pave the way for the deployment of fighter jets, including the MiG-29 and Su-30 MKI. This will bring these formidable aircraft much closer to the LAC.

Note: BRO would also soon start the construction of **Shinkun La Tunnel**, the world's highest tunnel at an altitude of 15,855 feet.

– The tunnel will connect Lahaul-Spiti in Himachal to the Zaskar Valley in Ladakh and provide all-weather connectivity,

43. Explained | What is arXiv, and why is it still relevant for scientific research?

Source: The post is based on the article “**Explained | What is arXiv, and why is it still relevant for scientific research?**” published in **The Hindu on 14th September 2023**

What is the News?

Several researchers have recently raised questions on the quality and impact of research shared on the arXiv platform.

What is arXiv?

arXiv is an online platform where researchers from various fields such as physicists, computer scientists, mathematicians, astronomers and others share their research papers for free.

Unlike traditional journals which take half a year or more to publish a paper, arXiv is fast as it does not have a peer review process.

How does arXiv's approval system work?

arXiv uses a moderation system to review and publish papers. When a paper is submitted, it's typically published within a day unless a moderator raises concerns.

However, there are challenges due to the high volume of submissions (up to 1,200 per day) and a limited number of volunteer moderators (about 200 across 150 categories). This has led to complaints about the moderation process being slow, unclear, and inconsistent.

What are the benefits of arXiv?

arXiv is an open-access platform, which means that anyone with an internet connection can access and download research papers for free. This openness promotes the sharing of knowledge and fosters collaboration among researchers worldwide.

Why is ArXiv bad for research?

Rushed Publications: Some researchers use arXiv to quickly publish their work just to claim a research area or gain attention. This rush can lead to less thoughtful or original research.

Diminished Value of Peer Review: Some researchers believe that arXiv's popularity has reduced the importance of peer review. Papers that are rejected by conferences may still gain influence on arXiv, which doesn't necessarily mean they are of high quality.

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Bias Toward Established Researchers: arXiv favours well-known researchers and prestigious labs in its endorsement process.

44. India, Canada hit pause on FTA talks amid strain in ties after Trudeau visit

Source: The post is based on the article **“India, Canada hit pause on FTA talks amid strain in ties after Trudeau visit”** published in **Indian Express on 16th September 2023**

What is the News?

India-Canada talks on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) are expected to resume after the resolution of the issues between the two countries.

What is the issue between India and Canada?

Ties between India and Canada have been strained over the activities of pro-Khalistan groups in Canada.

India has blamed Canada for not being proactive in containing the Khalistan problem because of “vote bank politics”.

On the other hand, Canada’s PM has argued that Canada is taking steps to fight extremism without compromising freedom of expression.

What is the status of India-Canada trade ties?

India and Canada have significant trade relations. In 2022, India was Canada’s 10th largest trading partner. Since 2018, India has also been the largest source of international students in Canada.

India’s total exports to Canada added up to US\$ 4.10 billion in 2022-23, up from US\$ 3.76 billion in 2021-22.

India’s imports from Canada added up to US\$ 4.05 billion in 2022-23, up from US\$ 3.13 billion in 2021-22.

Cumulative FDI from Canada since 2000 is about US\$ 4.07 billion. Over 600 Canadian companies have a presence in India.

Indian companies in Canada are active in Information Technology, software, steel, natural resources and banking sectors.

Major items of exports to Canada include gems, jewellery and precious stones, pharmaceutical products, ready-made garments, mechanical appliances, organic chemicals, light engineering goods, iron & steel articles.

On the other hand, India imports pulses, newsprint, wood pulp, asbestos, potash, iron scrap, copper, minerals and industrial chemicals from Canada.

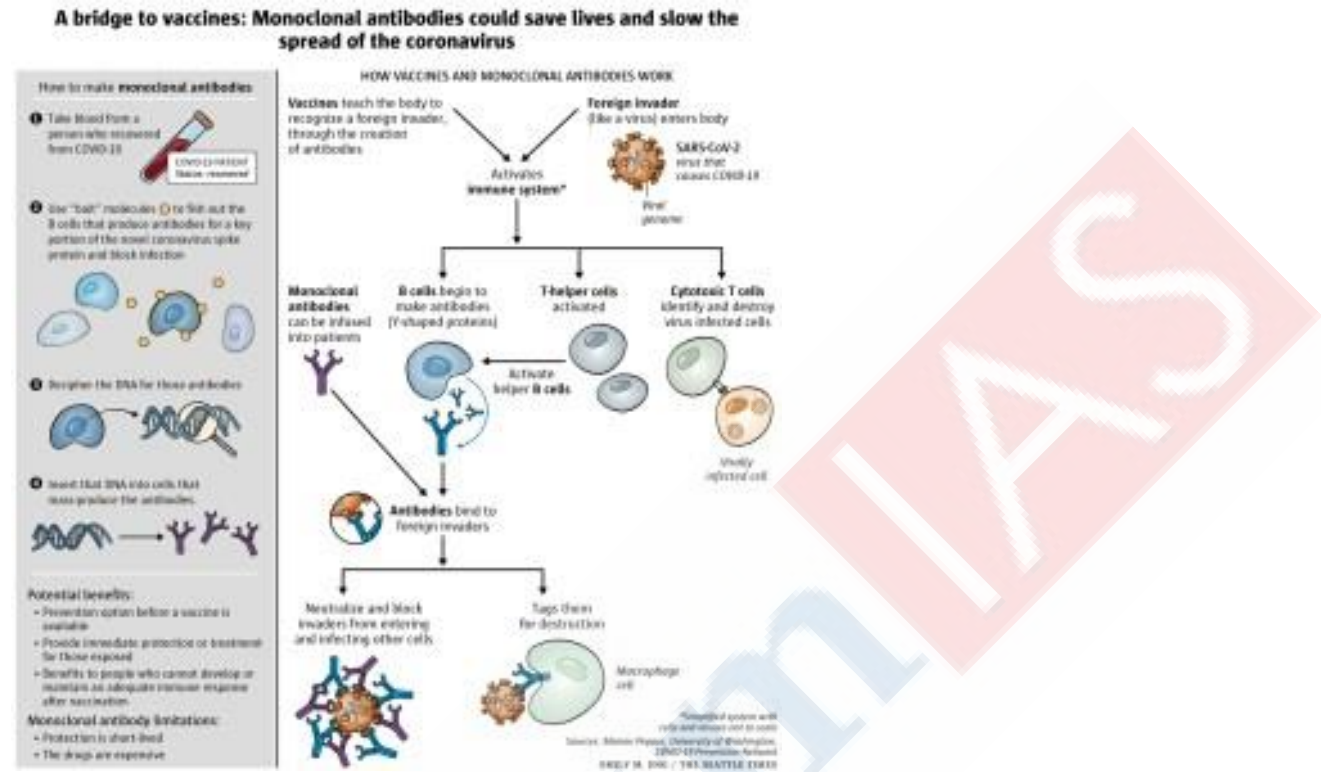
45. India seeks Australia’s help in battle against Nipah virus

Source: The post is based on the article **“India seeks Australia’s help in battle against Nipah virus”** published in **The Hindu on 16th September 2023**

What is the News?

India has reached out to Australia seeking to restock monoclonal antibody doses to combat the Nipah virus.

What are Monoclonal Antibodies?



To fight a viral infection, our bodies begin to create proteins known as antibodies. Monoclonal antibodies are artificial antibodies that mimic the activity of our immune systems.

They are produced through a process that involves extracting specific antibodies from human blood and then cloning them.

These monoclonal antibodies are designed to target a virus or a specific part of one — for instance, REGEN-COV2 is a cocktail of two monoclonal antibodies developed to target the Covid-19 spike protein.

The monoclonal antibodies bind to specific parts of the spike protein, blocking its ability to infect healthy cells.

Why is the government allowing the use of the monoclonal antibody for Nipah Virus?

First, there is no effective treatment for the infection other than relieving the symptoms. Once infected, the mortality can be a very high 40 to 75%. To compare, even at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the case fatality ratio (CFR) – proportion of people who die among those who test positive remained at around 3%.

Second, the monoclonal antibody has so far been used in 14 individuals globally and none of them died.

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46. On the occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti, PM to launch 'PM Vishwakarma' for traditional artisans and craftspeople

Source: The post is based on the article “On the occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti, PM to launch ‘PM Vishwakarma’ for traditional artisans and craftspeople” published in PIB on 15th September 2023

What is the News?

On the occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti, the Prime Minister will launch a new scheme named “PM Vishwakarma”.

What is PM Vishwakarma?

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 they 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 crafts will be covered under PM Vishwakarma. These include (i) Carpenter; (ii) Boat Maker; (iii) Armourer; (iv) Blacksmith ; (v) Hammer and Tool Kit Maker; (vi) Locksmith; (vii) Goldsmith; (viii) Potter; (ix) Sculptor, Stone breaker; (x) Cobbler (Shoemaker/ Footwear artisan); (xi) Mason (Rajmistri); (xii) Basket/Mat/Broom Maker/Coir Weaver; (xiii) Doll & Toy Maker (Traditional); (xiv) Barber; (xv) Garland maker; (xvi) Washerman; (xvii) Tailor; and (xviii) Fishing Net Maker.

Benefits under the scheme: Under the scheme, the Vishwakarmas will be registered free of charge through Common Services Centres using biometric based PM Vishwakarma portal.

– They will be provided **1)** recognition through PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card **2)** skill upgradation involving basic and advanced training **3)** toolkit incentive of ₹15,000 **4)** collateral-free credit support up to ₹1 lakh (first tranche) and ₹2 lakh (second tranche) at a concessional interest rate of 5%, incentive for digital transactions and marketing support.

47. Union Minister launches Unified Portal www.upag.gov.in for Agricultural Statistics

Source: The post is based on the article “Union Minister launches Unified Portal www.upag.gov.in for Agricultural Statistics” published in PIB on 15th September 2023

What is the News?

Member of NITI Aayog has officially launched Unified Portal for Agricultural Statistics (UPAg Portal).

What is UPAg Portal?

UPAg stands for Unified Portal for Agricultural Statistics (UPAg).

Purpose: It is an advanced agricultural data management platform designed to generate crop estimates and integrate with other systems generating Agriculture Statistics such as Price, Trade, Procurement, Stock etc.

– The portal serves as a centralized hub for near real time information on crop production, market trends, pricing, and other vital agricultural data.

Developed by: Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Created with love ❤️ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
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Key Features of the portal:

- **Data Standardization:** The portal standardizes data on prices, production, area, yield, and trade, making it accessible in one location, eliminating the need to compile data from multiple sources.
- **Data Analysis:** UPag Portal will perform advanced analytics, offering insights such as production trends, trade correlations, and consumption patterns, aiding policymakers in making informed decisions.
- **Granular Production Estimates:** The portal will generate granular production estimates with increased frequency, enhancing the government's ability to respond to agricultural crises swiftly.
- **Commodity Profile Reports:** Commodity profile reports will be produced using algorithms, minimizing subjectivity and providing users with comprehensive insights.
- **Plug and Play:** Users will have the flexibility to use the portal's data to prepare their own reports, promoting data-driven decision-making.

What are the key issues addressed by UPag Portal?

Lack of Standardized Data: Currently, agricultural data is scattered across various sources and often presented in different formats and units. UPag Portal aims to consolidate this data into a standardized format, making it easily accessible and understandable for users.

Lack of Verified Data: Reliable data is crucial for accurate policy decisions. UPag Portal ensures that data from sources like Agmarknet is vetted and updated in a timely manner, providing policymakers with accurate information on agricultural prices.

Dispersed Data: To form a comprehensive view of any crop, multiple variables need to be considered, including production, trade, and prices. UPag Portal brings together data from various sources, providing a holistic assessment of agricultural commodities.

Different Frequency Variables: Data updates at different times, causing delays and inefficiencies. UPag Portal offers real-time connectivity with data sources, reducing the time and effort required for monitoring and analysis.

48. Union Minister for Jal Shakti Jointly Launches Swachhata Hi Seva 2023 Campaign

Source: The post is based on the article “**Union Minister for Jal Shakti Jointly Launches Swachhata Hi Seva 2023 Campaign**” published in **PIB on 15th September 2023**

What is the News?

Union Minister for Jal Shakti and Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs jointly launched the pan-India Swachhata Pakhwada – Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) 2023 campaign.

What is the Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) campaign?

Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) campaign is being celebrated from 15th September to 2nd October this year under the joint aegis of Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Focus: The campaign will focus on achieving a visibly higher order of cleanliness across local bodies through the spirit of voluntarism and shramdaan as well as on the welfare of SafaiMitras.

– All Ministries and Departments will be organizing swachhata drives across offices, public places, heritage sites, river fronts in both rural and urban areas.

Theme for 2023: Garbage Free India.

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What are the activities that will be organized under SHS- 2023?

Swachhata Hi Seva – Fortnight long Cleanliness Drives: As a part of this, all Government of India Ministries, PSUs, State Govts. and local bodies will be organizing massive cleanliness drives across various locations.

Indian Swachhata League 2.0: It aims to mobilize youth groups at scale to take sustained ownership for swachhata across beaches, hills and tourist spots.

– The swachhata league will act as a catalyst for triggering action by the youth of the city towards the vision of garbage free cities under the Swachh Bharat Mission.

SafaiMitra Suraksha Shivir: These will be organized by various cities across the nation.

– These Shivirs (camps) are aimed at saturating welfare schemes for sanitation workers and their dependents and to improve their well-being and quality of life.

– The objective of the shivir is to target all sanitation workers in Solid Waste Management (SWM) & Used Water Management (UWM).

– The key activities will focus on mass awareness, preventive health checkups, yoga shivirs and extending entitlement of various welfare benefits of central & State Schemes in convergence with various ministries.

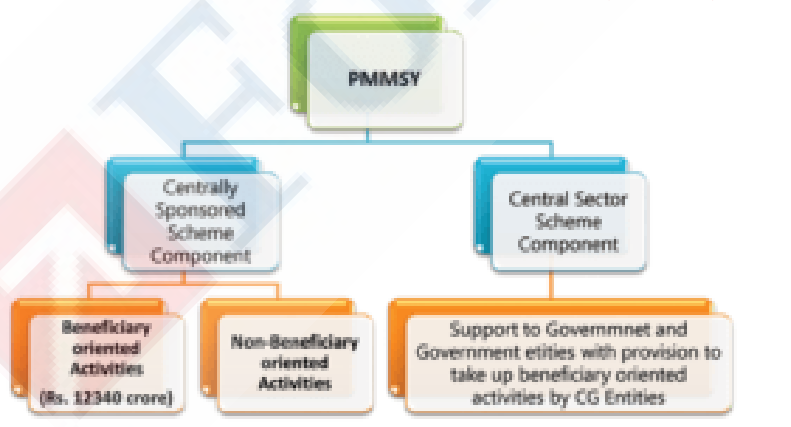
49. Department of Fisheries organizes event on 3rd Anniversary of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana in Indore

Source: The post is based on the article “Department of Fisheries organizes event on 3rd Anniversary of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana in Indore” published in **The Hindu on 16th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying has launched Matsya Sampada Jagrukta Abhiyan on the occasion of completion of three successful years of implementation of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojna(PMMSY).

What is Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojna(PMMSY)?



Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana is a scheme to bring about the Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of the fisheries sector in India.

Objectives of the scheme: Harnessing of fisheries potential in a sustainable, responsible, inclusive and equitable manner

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- Enhancing fish production and productivity through expansion, intensification, diversification and productive utilization of land and water.
- Modernizing and strengthening of the value chain – post-harvest management and quality improvement.
- Doubling fishers and fish farmers incomes and generation of employment.
- Enhancing contribution to Agriculture GVA and exports.
- Social, physical and economic security for fishers and fish farmers.
- Robust fisheries management and regulatory framework.

Duration of the scheme: The scheme is being implemented in all States and UTs for a period of 5 years from FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25.

[Click here to read more](#)

What is Matsya Sampada Jagrukta Abhiyan?

Organized by: Department of Fisheries.

Aim: To disseminate information and knowledge about 9 Years of achievements of the Government of India by highlighting success stories of the beneficiaries and reaching out to 2.8 crore fish farmers and 3477 coastal villages.

What are the success stories of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojna(PMMSY)?

Shri F.Laldingliana from Mizoram switched to aquaculture when he merely earned Rs 30,000 per year and now practices fisheries on his 2 ha land with 19 ponds.

Smt. R. Murugeswari from Tamil Nadu practices seaweed cultivation and the subsidy received under PMMSY helped her with funds for maintenance of rafts, meticulous net cleaning.

50. India's goods trade deficit hits a 10-month high

Source: The post is based on the article “India's goods trade deficit hits a 10-month high” published in **The Hindu on 16th September 2023**

What is the News?

India's foreign trade has hit a fresh trough in August with the goods trade deficit hitting a 10-month high.

India's Foreign Trade Challenges in August,2023: Goods exports have been declining for seven consecutive months.The goods trade deficit has reached a 10-month high.

- Services exports, which had been growing, decreased for the first time in over a year.

Impact of Oil Prices on Exports: Nearly half of the decline in exports this year has been due to falling petroleum prices.

- Export volumes of petroleum products increased by 6% from April to July, but prices were 27% lower than a year ago.

Challenges and recommendations: The Federation of Indian Exporters' Organisations (FIEO) noted subdued demand in major economies like the EU, U.S., China, Australia, and Asia.

- FIEO expects improvements in the coming months, especially with fresh orders expected for the Christmas and New Year season.

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– FIEO emphasizes the need for easy and cheaper credit for small enterprises, marketing support, exemption of GST levies on export freight, interest equalization support and an extension of the emergency credit line guarantee scheme to help exporters during challenging times.

51. Gati Shakti to help speedup auction of critical minerals

Source: The post is based on the article “**Gati Shakti to help speedup auction of critical minerals**” published in **Livemint on 16th September 2023**

What is the News?

PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan is helping in expediting the auction of critical minerals.

What is PM Gati Shakti?

PM Gati Shakti seeks to bring all relevant ministries and departments of the central government together, and create a digital platform for comprehensive and integrated project planning.

This includes dynamic mapping of all infrastructure projects with real-time updates.

The data from all individual ministries will be integrated into a single platform, facilitating planning, review, and monitoring.

How is PM Gati Shakti helping in expediting the auction of critical minerals?

The central government has authorized states to use their own records and the online resources of PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan for defining mining areas.

The revised land demarcation and classification rules have helped identify well-defined mining zones and streamline the auction process.

For instance, amendments made in September 2023 to the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015, allow state governments to use land details available on the PM Gati Shakti-National Master Plan for Multi-modal Connectivity platform or state government land record portals for land classification.

This change is expected to expedite the land demarcation and classification making it faster to prepare blocks for auctions.

Previously, the 2015 mineral auction regulations required offline identification and demarcation of mineral blocks using technology like total station and differential global positioning system (DGPS), which caused delays. Hence, this new approach using online records is expected to simplify and expedite the process.

52. Govt launches Skill India Digital for transforming skill, education, entrepreneurship landscape of India

Source: The post is based on the article “**Govt launches Skill India Digital for transforming skill, education, entrepreneurship landscape of India**” published in **Indian Express on 15th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Ministry of Skill Development has launched the Skill India Digital (SID) platform.

What is Skill India Digital (SID) Platform?

Skill India Digital (SID) Platform is a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for skilling, education, employment and entrepreneurship ecosystem of India.

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It is a comprehensive digital platform aimed at synergizing and transforming the skills, education, employment, and entrepreneurship landscape of India.

Built by: National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in collaboration with multiple industry players.

Part of: The platform is part of the World Bank-assisted Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) programme

Key Features of the platform:

The platform acts as a comprehensive information gateway for government skilling and entrepreneurship initiatives.

It encompasses training programs from central and state governments, creating a centralized hub for skill development initiatives.

All courses compliant with the National Skilling Qualification Framework (NSQF) will also be accessible on the platform.

Additionally, the platform integrates with other government portals such as the UDYAM portal for micro and small enterprises and the Atma Nirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM) portal.

The platform also supports multiple Indian languages and ensures secure access with Aadhaar-based eKYC.

It adopts a mobile-first approach, making learning accessible through handheld devices.

It showcases individuals' skills and qualifications through Digitally Verified Credentials, offering secure and tamper-proof verification.

Digital CVs with personalized QR codes allow potential employers or partners to easily access a candidate's portfolio, including skills, qualifications, experiences and achievements.