Factly Compilation

18th to 23rd September, 2023

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

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1. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change celebrates 29th World Ozone Day

Source: The post is based on the article **"Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change celebrates 29th World Ozone Day"** published in **PIB on 17th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has celebrated the 29th World Ozone Day.

What is World Ozone Day?

World Ozone Day is celebrated on 16th September each year to commemorate the signing of the Montreal Protocol.

Aim; To spread awareness among people about the depletion of Ozone Layer and the measures taken/ to be taken to preserve it.

Theme: "Montreal Protocol: fixing the ozone layer and reducing climate change".

What is an Ozone Layer?

Ozone Layer exists in the Stratosphere, between 10 KM and 40 KM above the Earth's surface.

Ozone formed in the stratosphere called stratospheric ozone or good Ozone.Without the Ozone layer, radiation from the sun would reach earth directly, having ill effects on human health, i.e., eye cataract, skin cancer, etc., and adverse impacts on agriculture, forestry and marine life.

Man Made chemicals containing chlorine and bromine reach the stratosphere and undergo a complex series of catalytic reactions, leading to destruction of ozone. These chemicals are called Ozone Depleting Substances.

What is the Vienna Convention?

Vienna Convention is an international treaty on the protection of the Ozone Layer.It came into force in 1985.

Under this convention, the Montreal Protocol came into force in 1987 to repair the ozone layer to protect the earth's Ozone Layer by phasing out production and consumption of Ozone Depleting Substances for end applications.

What is the Montreal Protocol?

Click Here to read

What are India's achievements in implementation of Montreal Protocol?

India has been successfully implementing the Montreal Protocol and its ozone depleting substances phase out projects and activities in line with the phase out schedule of the Protocol.

India has phased out Chlorofluorocarbons, Carbon tetrachloride, Halons, Methyl Bromide and Methyl Chloroform for controlled uses is in line with the Montreal Protocol phase out schedule.

Currently Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) are being phased out as per the accelerated schedule of the Montreal Protocol.

Hydrochlorofluorocarbons Phase out Management Plan (HPMP) Stage-I has been successfully implemented from 2012 to 2016 and Hydrochlorofluorocarbons Phase out Management Plan (HPMP) Stage- II is currently under implementation from 2017 and will be completed by the end of 2024.

What is the Kigali Agreement?

Click Here to read

India has ratified the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.

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India will complete its phase down of production and consumption of Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) for controlled uses in 4 steps from 2032 onwards with cumulative reduction of 10% in 2032, 20% in 2037, 30% in 2042 and 85% in 2047.

What is the India Cooling Action Plan(ICAP)?

Click Here to read

2. Tagore's home Santiniketan added to UNESCO World Heritage List

Source: The post is based on the article "**Tagore's home Santiniketan added to UNESCO World Heritage List**" published in **Indian Express on 18th September 2023**

What is the News?

Santiniketan, the home of late Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore has been added to the UNESCO World Heritage sites list.

What is Santiniketan?

Santiniketan is a town located in West Bengal's Birbhum district.

The name of the city literally means the 'abode of peace'.It was named after a local dacoit Bhuban and was earlier called 'Bhubandanga'.

Established by: It was originally an ashram built by Debendranath Tagore (father of Rabindranath Tagore) where anyone, irrespective of caste and creed, could come and spend time meditating on the one Supreme God.

– Later, Rabindranath Tagore envisioned it as a university town and established a school.It was called Brahmachary Ashram, and was later expanded into the Visva-Bharati University.

Features: Distinct from the prevailing British colonial architectural orientations of the early 20th century and of European modernism, Santiniketan represents approaches toward a pan-Asian modernity, drawing on ancient, medieval and folk traditions from across the region.

– Santiniketan is also adorned with splendid sculptures, frescoes, murals, and paintings created by renowned artists such as Rabindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose (one of the pioneers of modern Indian art) and Ramkinkar Baij (master sculptor and painter) among others.

Significance: Visva-Bharati in Santiniketan is Bengal's only central university.The Prime Minister is the chancellor of the varsity.

3. Commemorating one year of successful implementation of Project Cheetah in India

Source: The post is based on the article **"Commemorating one year of successful implementation of Project Cheetah in India"** published in **PIB on 17th September 2023**

What is the News?

September 17th,2023 marked the first anniversary of the Project Cheetah.

What is Project Cheetah?

Project Cheetah is an initiative in India aimed at relocating cheetahs.It was the first intercontinental transfer of wild cats into India since independence.

The project plans to bring 12-14 cheetahs from South Africa/Namibia/ other African Countries, annually for the next 5 years and after that, as and when required.

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What is the status of the project?

In total, 20 adult African cheetahs have been imported so far. The first batch of eight cheetahs arrived and another batch of 12 cheetahs from South Africa arrived.

Recently, one of the females gave birth to a litter of four cubs which were conceived in India.

Six of the cheetahs which came from Africa have died. Four while still in captivity and two in the wild.

How has Project Cheetah performed according to the government?

In 2022, Government of India had released Cheetah Action Plan that lists six short-term success criteria such as 1) 50% survival of the introduced cheetahs for the first year 2) establishment of home ranges in Kuno National Park 3) successful cheetah reproduction in the wild 4) survival of wild-born cheetah cubs past one year 5) successful F1 generation breeding and 6) cheetah-based revenues contributing to community livelihoods. F1 stands for the first generation of offspring.

On completion of one year of Project Cheetah, the Government released a report which said that the project has achieved four of these criteria which are – 50% survival of the introduced cheetahs, establishment of home ranges, birth of cubs in Kuno National Park, and direct revenue contributions to local communities through the engagement of cheetah trackers and indirect appreciation of land value in surrounding areas.

What are the future plans under Project Cheetah?

Other alternative sites for cheetah introductions are being prepared at Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary and also at Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary.

4. **Prime Minister launches 'PM Vishwakarma' Scheme for traditional artisans and craftspeople on occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti**

Source: The post is based on the article **"Prime Minister launches 'PM Vishwakarma' Scheme for traditional artisans and craftspeople on occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti"** published in **PIB on 17th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Prime Minister has launched 'PM Vishwakarma Scheme' for traditional artisans and craftspeople on the occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti.

What is the PM Vishwakarma Scheme?

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise.

– The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, would provide active support for implementation of the scheme for the wellbeing of the Vishwakarmas.

Type: Central Sector Scheme

Aim: To enhance the accessibility and quality of products and services offered by traditional artisans and craftsmen.

Coverage: The scheme will provide support to artisans and craftspeople in rural and urban areas across India. Initially, 18 traditional trades will be covered.

Benefits under the scheme: Under the scheme, the Vishwakarma workers will be registered for free through Common Services Centres using the biometric-based PM Vishwakarma portal.

– They will then be provided recognition through the PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card, given skill upgradation involving basic and advanced training, a toolkit incentive of ₹15,000,

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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.

What does Vishwakarma means?

Vishwakarma, in Hindu mythology, is seen as the architect of the gods and was the divine carpenter and master craftsman who fashioned the weapons of the gods and built their cities and chariots.

Some legends say he was the architect of the mythical city Lanka mentioned in the Hindu epic Ramayana and is also said to have made the great image of Jagannatha at Puri in Odisha.He is considered the patron deity of workers, artisans, and artists.

5. Seating capacity of 11,000 persons, largest LED media facade: Here is what state-of-the-art convention centre Yashobhoomi will offer

Source: The post is based on the article **"Seating capacity of 11,000 persons, largest LED media facade: Here is what state-of-the-art convention centre Yashobhoomi will offer"** published in **Indian Express on 18th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Prime Minister has announced that he will inaugurate a state-of-the-art convention centre —'Yashobhoomi'.

What is Yashobhoomi?

Yashobhoomi is India's new world-class convention center.It is located in Dwarka, New Delhi.

The facility consists of a Convention Centre, multiple exhibition halls and other facilities.

The Convention Centre, built across more than 73,000 square metres of area, comprises 15 convention rooms, including the main auditorium, the grand ballroom, and 13 meeting rooms with a capacity of holding 11,000 delegates.

The convention centre has the **largest LED media facade in the country**.The plenary hall in the convention centre is equipped with a seating capacity of around 6,000 guests.

The auditorium has an innovative automated seating system which allows the floor to be a flat floor or an auditorium style tiered seating for different configurations along with wooden floors and acoustic wall panels.

The centre has **one of the world's largest MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) facilities.**

The centre also offers **some of the largest exhibition halls in the world**.These halls will be utilized for hosting exhibitions, trade fairs, and business events, and are connected to a grand foyer space designed with copper ceiling which filters light in the space through various skylights.

Significance: Yashobhoomi is the second convention centre with world-class infrastructure for exhibitions and conferences after the Bharat Mandapam, which played host to world leaders at the recently concluded G20 Summit.

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6. Odisha hit by two major disease outbreaks. All you need to know about Scrub Typhus, Leptospirosis

Source: The post is based on the article **"Odisha hit by two major disease outbreaks. All you need to know about Scrub Typhus, Leptospirosis"** published in **Livemint on 18th September 2023**

What is the News?

Odisha has been impacted from two disease outbreaks –Scrub Typhus and Leptospirosis–which have killed six people in the state so far.

What is Scrub Typhus?

Scrub typhus, also known as bush typhus, is a disease caused by a bacteria called Orientia tsutsugamushi.

Scrub typhus is spread to people through bites of infected chiggers (larval mites).

People who frequently visit farmlands or forests are vulnerable to the infection.

Some of the common symptoms of scrub typhus include fever, headache, body aches, and sometimes rash.Symptoms of scrub typhus usually begin within 10 days of being bitten.

No vaccine is available to prevent scrub typhus.

What is Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a potentially fatal zoonotic bacterial disease.

Caused by: The disease is caused by a bacterium called Leptospira interrogans, or Leptospira.

Vulnerable areas: The disease is more prevalent in warm, humid countries and in both urban and rural areas.It affects an estimated 1.03 million people every year, killing around 60,000.

The carriers of the disease can be either wild or domestic animals, including rodents, cattle, pigs, and dogs.

Symptoms: High fever, headache, chills, vomiting, red eyes, abdominal pain, rashes, and diarrhea.

– Without treatment, Leptospirosis can lead to kidney damage, meningitis (inflammation of the membrane around the brain and spinal cord), liver failure, respiratory distress, and even death.

7. Why London's India Club, visited by leaders like Nehru, Mountbatten and VK Menon, is closing down

Source: The post is based on the article **"Why London's India Club, visited by leaders like Nehru, Mountbatten and VK Menon, is closing down"** published in **Indian Express on 18th September 2023**

What is the News?

London's India Club is set to close down permanently on September 17 after decades of operations.

What is India Club?

India club is located in the Strand Continental Hotel in London,UK.

It was started in 1951 by the India League, a British organization that started out as an advocate for Indian independence and self-rule (swaraj) and included members of the elite in British society.

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Later on, it hoped to play a role in furthering Indo-British friendship in the post-independence era.

Which famous personalities visited India Club?

VK Krishna Menon, the diplomat and former Indian Defence Minister had a role to play in the founding of the Club as one of the secretaries of the India Club.

Dr Rajendra Prasad, the first President of independent India, Lord Mountbatten – the last Viceroy of India, former Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the first British Indian MP Dadabhai Naoroji visited this club.

Why is India Club closing down?

The India Club is shutting down due to a combination of factors.The owners have been running the establishment since 1997. In 2018, they faced a threat of partial demolition when the landlords wanted to modernize the building. They launched a "Save India Club" campaign and initially succeeded in preventing demolition.

However, the COVID-19 lockdowns in the UK severely affected restaurant businesses, and the owners also faced steep rent increases during a cost-of-living crisis.These challenges made it financially unsustainable for them to continue running the India Club.

8. Karnataka's sacred ensembles of Hoysalas inscribed on UNESCO world heritage list

Source: The post is based on the article "**Karnataka's sacred ensembles of Hoysalas inscribed on UNESCO world heritage list**" published in I**ndian Express on 19th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas has been inscribed on the UNESCO's World Heritage List.This will be India's 42nd UNESCO World Heritage Site.

What are Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas?

Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas comprises three temples in Karnataka namely the Channakeshava temple in Belur, the Hoysaleshvara temple in Halebidu and the Keshava temple in Somanathapura.

These temples were constructed during the 12th and 13th centuries by the Hoysala kings and are dedicated to deities Shiva and Vishnu.

Channakeshava temple – Belur:

Chennakeshava Temple is also referred to as Vijayanarayana Temple of Belur.It is a 12th-century Hindu temple in Karnataka.

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It is located on the banks of Yagachi River (also called Badari River in historic texts), a tributary of Hemavati River.

The temple was commissioned by King Vishnuvardhana in 1117 CE, on the banks of the Yagachi River in Belur also called Velapura, an early Hoysala Empire capital.

The temple is devoted to Vishnu.

The richly sculptured exterior of the temple narrates scenes from the life of Vishnu and his reincarnations and the epics, Ramayana, and Mahabharata.However, some of the representations of Shiva are also included.

Hoysaleshvara temple in Halebidu:

Hoysaleswara temple also referred simply as the Halebidu temple is a 12th-century Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva.It is located on the banks of Dwarasamudra tank.

The temple was built in 1121CE during the reign of the Hoysala King, Vishnuvardhana Hoysaleshwara.

The temple is most well-known for the more than 240 wall sculptures that run all along the outer wall.

Keshava Temple- Somanathapura:

Keshava Temple is a Vaishnava temple on the banks of River Kaveri at Somanathapura, Karnataka.

The temple was consecrated in 1258 CE by Somanatha Dandanayaka, a general of the Hoysala King Narasimha III.

The temple is enclosed in a courtyard with a pillared corridor of small shrines (damaged).The main temple in the center is on a high star-shaped platform with three symmetrical sanctums (garbha-griha).

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The western sanctum was for a statue of Kesava (missing), the northern sanctum of Janardhana and the southern sanctum of Venugopala, all forms of Vishnu.

9. 2nd Edition of Indian Navy's Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Seminar (Swavlamban-2023)

Source: The post is based on the article "**2nd Edition of Indian Navy's Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Seminar (Swavlamban-2023)**" published in **PIB on 18th September 2023**

What is the News?

The 2nd Edition of the Indian Navy's Naval Innovation and Indigenisation (NIIO) Seminar – '**Swavlamban 2023**' is scheduled to be conducted.

What is Swavlamban 2023?

Organized by: Indian Navy's Naval Innovation and Indigenisation (NIIO)

Purpose: To engage Indian industry and academia towards achieving self-reliance in the Defence sector.

What is the SPRINT Initiative?

SPRINT is a collaborative initiative being undertaken by Naval Innovation and Indigenisation (NIIO) in conjunction with the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO).

Full Form: SPRINT stands for **S**upporting **P**ole-Vaulting in **R**&D through **I**nnovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), **N**IIO and **T**echnology Development Acceleration Cell (TDAC).

Aim: To give a boost to the usage of indigenous technology in the Indian Navy.

As part of this initiative, Indian Navy aims to induct at least 75 new indigenous technologies/products into the Indian Navy.

10. Coastal security drill 'Operation Sajag' conducted by Indian Coast Guard along the west coast

Source: The post is based on the article "**Coastal security drill 'Operation Sajag' conducted by Indian Coast Guard along the west coast**" published in **PIB on 18th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Indian Coast Guard conducted a drill called "Operation Sajag" along the west coast.

What is Operation Sajag?

Operation Sajag is a monthly drill conducted by Indian Coast Guard

Purpose: To revalidate the coastal security system while raising awareness among fishermen at sea.

Significance: The drill involves a thorough review of various coastal security measures and highlights important lessons and emerging trends in coastal security.

What are the measures taken to strengthen coastal security?

The measures taken to strengthen coastal security are: Issuance of Biometric cards for the fishermen, colour coding of fishing boats as per each state, manning of fish landing centers and access control at entry/exit check points, coastal mapping, designating specific marine band frequency for security agencies, training of marine police personnel by Indian Coast Guard amongst others.

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11. SHREYAS scheme empowers thousands: over 2300 crore rupees allocated for education of SC and OBC students since 2014

Source: The post is based on the article **"SHREYAS scheme empowers thousands: over 2300 crore rupees allocated for education of SC and OBC students since 2014"** published in **PIB on 18th September 2023**

What is the News?

This article talks about the sub schemes under the SHREYAS Scheme.

What is SHREYAS Scheme?

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment

Full Form: Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme(SHREYAS)

Sub Schemes: The scheme comprises of 4 central sector sub-schemes.These all sub-schemes are central sector schemes:

Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs: The objective of the Scheme is to provide coaching of good quality for economically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) candidates to enable them appear in competitive and entrance examinations for obtaining appropriate jobs in Public/Private Sector as well as for securing admission in reputed technical and professional higher education institutions.

– The ceiling of the total family income under the scheme is 8 lakhs per annum.3500 slots are allotted per annum.

– The ratio of SC: OBC students is 70:30 and 30% slots are reserved for females in each category. In case of non-availability of the adequate number of candidates in SC category, the Ministry can relax this ratio. However, in no case, less than 50% SC students shall be permitted.

Top Class Education for SCs: The Scheme aims at recognizing and promoting quality education amongst students belonging to SCs, by providing full financial support.The Scheme will cover SC students for pursuing studies beyond 12th class.

– The scholarship, once awarded, will continue till the completion of the course, subject to satisfactory performance of the student.

– The ceiling of the total family income under the scheme is 8 lakhs per annum.

National Overseas Scheme for SCs: The scheme provides financial assistance to the selected students from SCs (115 slots); De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (6 slots); landless agricultural laborers and traditional artisan categories (4 slots), for pursuing masters and Ph.D. level courses abroad.Presently, 125 slots are allotted under the scheme.

– **Eligibility**: Total family income including the candidate is less than Rs. 8 lakhs per annum, secured more than 60% marks in the qualifying examination, are below 35 years of age and secured admission in top 500 QS ranking foreign Institutes/ Universities.

– **Benefits:** The scheme provides total tuition fee, maintenance and contingency allowance, visa fee, to and fro air passage etc to the awardees.

National Fellowship for SC Students: The scheme provides fellowship to Scheduled Castes students for pursuing higher education leading to M.Phil/ Ph.D degrees in Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences in Indian Universities/Institutions/ Colleges recognized by University Grants Commission (UGC).

– The scheme provides for 2000 new slots per year (500 for science stream and 1500 for Humanities and Social Sciences) who have qualified the National Eligibility Test- Junior Research

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Fellowship (NET-JRF) of UGC and Junior Research Fellows for Science stream qualifying UGC-Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (UGC-CSIR) Joint Test.

12. Indian govt launches the Kisan Rin Portal with the weather portal WIND

Source: The post is based on the article **"Indian govt launches the Kisan Rin Portal with the weather portal WIND"** published in **Business Standard on 19th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Finance Minister and Agriculture Minister have inaugurated the 'Kisan Rin Portal' and WINDS portal.

What is Kisan Rin Portal?

Kisan Rin Portal aims to give farmers subsidized loans under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme.

The portal will offer a comprehensive view of farmer data, scheme utilization progress, loan disbursement specifics and interest subvention claims to increase seamless integration with banks for more effective and efficient agriculture credit.

What is WINDS Portal?

Full Form: Weather information Network Data Systems (WINDS)

Purpose: To leverage advanced weather data analytics to give stakeholders actionable insight to make informed weather decisions on agriculture.

13. 600 self-neutralizing 'Vibhav' anti-tank mines with safety mechanism inducted into Army

Source: The post isa based on the article **"600 self-neutralizing 'Vibhav' anti-tank mines with safety mechanism inducted into Army"** published in **TOI on 19th September 2023**

What is the News?

Indian Army has inducted six hundred indigenously manufactured self-neutralizing anti-tank mines known as "Vibhav".

What is Vibhav?

Vibhav is an indigenously manufactured self-neutralizing anti-tank mine.

Developed by: Indian Army in a joint venture with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Purpose: It is designed to provide mobility kill against all enemy armoured vehicles.

Key Features:

Vibhav is constructed from modern plastic material, providing strength and durability for storage, handling, and use in various field conditions.

It can be deployed either manually or mechanically.

It incorporates a range of safety and activation mechanisms to ensure safe handling, effectiveness against targets, and reliability.

It features integrated explosive, mechanical, and electronic safety components, prioritizing operator safety.

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The mine includes an electronic anti-handling and anti-lift device (EAHALD) that remains active for 120 days once armed.

It has a storage life of 10 years and does not require any special storage conditions.

14. Bureau of Indian Standards establishes 6467 Standard Clubs for students across nation

Source: The post is based on the article **"Bureau of Indian Standards establishes 6467 Standard Clubs for students across nation"** published in **PIB on 19th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has announced that it has established 6467 Standard Clubs in schools and colleges across the country.

What are Standard Clubs?

Launched by: Bureau of Indian Standards(BIS) in 2001

Purpose: They are being established with an objective to sensitize young members of society about the importance of standards in improving quality of life.

Eligibility: Standards Clubs can be formed in any educational institution in India comprising teachers and students – High & Higher Secondary schools, engineering colleges, science colleges, polytechnics, professional institutions.

– Students of class IX and above and studying science subjects are also eligible to be part of the Clubs.

– Consumer Organizations/Non-Government Organizations/Voluntary Organizations registered on the Consumer Engagement Portal of BIS can also facilitate the formation & functioning of above Standards Clubs in Educational Institutions other than Engineering Institutions.

Formation: Each Standards Club comprises a science teacher as its mentor and a minimum of 15 students as members.

Activities: The student members of these Standards clubs engage in a variety of activities, like: Standards writing competitions, Quiz competitions, Debates, essay writing and poster making and Exposure visits to laboratories & Industrial units and more.

Financial assistance: The financial support for Standards Clubs in Engineering Institutions would be limited to a maximum amount of Rs 100,000/- per year, subject to the condition that at least two activities must be organized every year.

– The financial support for Standards Clubs in institutions other than Engineering Institutions would be limited to Rs 10,000/- maximum, for each of the three activities in a year for each Standards Clubs.

– High and higher secondary eligible Government Schools with Standards Clubs are also entitled to receive a one-time Laboratory Grant to a maximum of Rs. 50,000/- in the form of state of the art lab equipment for upgrading their Science Lab.

– Financial assistance of upto Rs.1,00,000 will be given to establish 'Manak Kaksha' in government institutions where Standards Clubs have been formed.Under this initiative one room in the school shall be renovated by providing basic amenities like smart TVs, audio video systems, proper illumination, decorating the walls etc.

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15. Centre floats new science awards

Source: The post is based on the article **"Centre floats new science awards"** published in **The Hindu on 20th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Government of India has decided to constitute a new set of awards for scientists called Rashtriya Vigyan Puruskar.

What is Rashtriya Vigyan Puruskar?

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar has been constituted to felicitate scientists, technologists and innovators.

Categories: The award will be given under four categories:

– Vigyan Ratna: It will recognise the lifetime achievement of scientists

– Vigyan Shri: It will recognise distinguished contributions to a field

– Vigyan Yuva Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar: It will encourage young scientists who have made exceptional contributions in their field and

– Vigyan Team: It will recognise teams of three or more.

Domains: These awards will be given annually for 13 domains: physics, chemistry, biological sciences, mathematics and computer science, earth science, medicine, engineering science, agricultural science, environmental science, technology and innovation, atomic energy, space science and technology, and others.

Number of awards: There will only be three Vigyan Ratnas awarded yearly, 25 Vigyan Shri, 25 Vigyan Yuva, and 3 Vigyan Team.Only Vigyan Yuva will have an age limit of 45 years.

– The awards can also be given to Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs).However, only one PIO can receive the Vigyan Ratna award, while three PIOs can be selected for both the Vigyan Shri and the Vigyan Yuva awards.PIOs are not eligible for the Vigyan Team awards.

Nominations Process: Nominations for the awards will be accepted every year between January 14 and February 28, which is recognised as National Science Day.

– The awards will be announced on National Technology Day, May 11.

– The award ceremony will be held every year on the National Space Day, August 23, to mark the day India's Chandrayaan-3 landed on the Moon.

Committee to give awards: A committee under the chairmanship of the principal scientific adviser will select the awardees.This committee will be constituted annually.

– The awards processes will be managed by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) for the first two years and will be taken over by the newly instituted National Research Foundation.

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16. WHO releases report on global impact of high BP

Source: The post is based on the article "**WHO releases report on global impact of high BP**"published in **The Hindu on 20th September 2023**

What is the News?

The World Health Organization (WHO) has released its first-ever report on the devastating global impact of High Blood Pressure(BP) or Hypertension.

What are the key findings of the WHO Report on High Blood Pressure(BP)?

Globally: Hypertension affects 1 in 3 adults worldwide.This common deadly condition leads to stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney damage and many other health problems.

The number of people living with hypertension doubled between 1990 and 2019, from 650 million to 1.3 billion.

Nearly half of people with hypertension globally are currently unaware of their condition.

More than three-quarters of adults with hypertension live in low- and middle-income countries.

Approximately 4 out of every 5 people with hypertension are not adequately treated, but if countries can scale up coverage, 76 million deaths could be averted between 2023 and 2050.

Hypertension in India: The 2019-20 National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) reported a hypertension prevalence of 24% in men and 21% among women, an increase from 19% and 17% respectively, from the previous round (2015-16).

Hypertension is the most important risk factor for death and disability in India.

Less than one-fourth of hypertensive patients in India had their blood pressure under control during 2016-2020.

What are the recommendations given by WHO to control Hypertension?

Protocol: practical dose- and drug-specific treatment protocols with specific action steps for managing uncontrolled blood pressure can streamline care and improve adherence.

Medication and equipment supply: regular, uninterrupted access to affordable medication is necessary for effective hypertension treatment; currently, prices for essential anti-hypertensive medicines vary by more than ten-fold between countries.

Team-based care: patient outcomes improve when a team collaborates to adjust and intensify blood pressure medication regimens per doctor orders and protocols.

Patient-centred services: to reduce barriers to care by providing easy-to-take medication regimens, free medications and close-to-home follow-up visits, and making blood pressure monitoring readily available.

Information systems: user-centered, simple information systems facilitate rapid recording of essential patient-level data, reduce health care worker data entry burden, and support rapid scale-up while maintaining or improving the quality of care.

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17. Union Health Minister addresses annual meeting of the Friends of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and Mental Health

Source: The post is based on the article **"Union Health Minister addresses annual meeting of the Friends of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and Mental Health"** published in **PIB on 19th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Health Minister addressed the annual meeting of the Friends of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health on the occasion of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly.

What is the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on NCDs (UNIATF)?

UNIATF was established by the UN Secretary-General in 2013 and placed under WHO's leadership.

Its role is to bring the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations together to support governments to meet the NCD-related SDG targets which includes mental health.

The Task Force supports governments to meet high-level commitments made at the United Nations General Assembly and the World Health Assembly, including the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013–2030.

The task force reports each year to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

What are the key highlights from the Union Health Minister address to UNIATF?

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are a significant global health problem, responsible for about 74% of all deaths worldwide, and in India, they account for 63% of all deaths.This places immense pressure on healthcare systems and has a substantial socioeconomic impact.

India's approach towards tackling NCDs includes implementing the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD).The strategy aims to provide standard care to 75 million people with hypertension and diabetes by 2025.

For every individual, a single Ayushman Bharat Health Account Number (ABHA-ID) is being maintained and tracking of every single individual with NCDs is done through National NCD Portal.

Ayushman Bharat has introduced Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) that offer population-level interventions for the prevention, screening, control, and management of five common NCDs i.e., hypertension, diabetes, oral cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana provides health assurance/ insurance coverage for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. Rs. 5 lakh coverage per family per year is provided to over 600 million beneficiaries.

18. National Workshop on e-NAM 2.0 and Agri Marketing Reforms

Source: The post is based on the article **"National Workshop on e-NAM 2.0 and Agri Marketing Reforms"** published in **PIB on 19th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Ministry of Agriculture has organized a day-long workshop on "e-NAM 2.0 and agriculture marketing reforms".

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What is e-NAM?

National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) is a pan-India electronic trading portal launched in 2016.

The platform connects the current Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis to form a unified national market for agricultural commodities.

The portal is managed by "Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)", under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

At present, 1,361 regulated mandis in 23 states and four Union Territories are linked with the electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM).

e-NAM has been able to bring competence in APMC mandi operations via: 1) technology interventions 2) accuracy in weighment via digital weighbridge and weighing scale 3) real-time online information on commodity prices 4) access to more buyers/sellers and transparency in trade (due to on-line mode of auction) resulting in competitive bidding and there by better price discovery 5) transparency in payment via multiple online payment modes and 6) better efficiency in overall mandi operations via digitalization.

How will e-NAM 2.0 be different from current e-NAM?

e-NAM 2.0 will be an advanced version of existing e-NAM wherein the reforms in the State Acts will be very important in the success of e-NAM 2.0.

19. Three Hoysala temples declared World Heritage Sites

Source: The post is based on the article **"Three Hoysala temples declared World Heritage Sites"** published in **The Hindu on 19th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Sacred Ensembles of Hoysalas were declared UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

What are Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas?

Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas comprises three temples in Karnataka namely the Channakeshava temple in Belur, the Hoysaleshvara temple in Halebidu and the Keshava temple in Somanathapura.

These temples were constructed during the 12th and 13th centuries by the Hoysala kings and are dedicated to deities Shiva and Vishnu.

These temples are known for their ornate and incredibly detailed stone carvings that are put together in a stellate plan on a star-shaped raised platform.

The material used in temple construction is chlorite schist which is also known as soapstone that is soft and amiable to carving.

The temples have horizontal friezes and many of the sculptures are signed by artists which is unique in the history of Indian art while the doorways show intricate carvings showcasing the excellence achieved by the artist.

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20. Revolutionizing Indian Agriculture: MoA&FW Unveils Game-Changing Initiatives for Farmers

Source: The post is based on the article **"Revolutionizing Indian Agriculture: MoA&FW Unveils Game-Changing Initiatives for Farmers"** published in **PIB on 19th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Finance Minister and Union Agriculture Minister have launched several initiatives focused on agri-credit and crop insurance.

What are the initiatives launched by the government?

Kisan Rin Portal:

Kisan Rin Portal (KRP) is a collaborative effort between Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW), Department of Financial Services (DFS), Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAH&D), Department of Fisheries (DoF), RBI and NABARD.

The portal aims to revolutionize access to credit services for farmers through the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) and help them access subsidized agriculture credit through the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS).

The portal also serves as a central hub where farmer data, loan disbursement details, interest subvention claims, and progress in utilizing the schemes are integrated.

It allows for smooth coordination with banks and enables proactive policy actions, strategic guidance and improvements to make agriculture credit more effective and ensure the optimal use of interest subvention.

WINDS Portal:

Full Form: Weather Information Network Data Systems (WINDS)

Purpose: To ensure real time weather information so that farmers can take right precaution for their crops at the right time.

The portal aims to establish a network of Automatic Weather Stations & Rain Gauges at the taluk/block and gram panchayat levels.This will help create a robust database of hyper-local weather data, supporting various agricultural services.

KCC Ghar Ghar Abhiyaan:

The aim of the campaign is to ensure that every farmer has unhindered access to credit facilities that drive their agricultural pursuits.

The campaign will begin from 1st October 2023 to 31st December 2023.

The campaign will help in the saturation of KCC accounts among eligible PM-Kisan beneficiary farmers by connecting around 1.5 crore beneficiaries who are not yet connected to KCC scheme.

21. Army likely to complete inducting 114 Dhanush guns by 2026

Source: The post is based on the article **"Army likely to complete inducting 114 Dhanush guns by 2026"** published in **The Hindu on 20th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Indian Army is on track to complete the induction of 114 Dhanush artillery guns by 2026, with one regiment already operational.

The Pralay missile is also in advanced stages of induction.

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What is Dhanush?

Dhanush is a 155 mm, 45-calibre towed artillery gun with a range of 36 km.

The gun has demonstrated a range of 38 km.

The gun is an upgrade of the existing 155 mm, 39-calibre Bofors FH 77 gun.

The Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited, carved after corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board is now manufacturing the Dhanush guns.

What is a Pralay missile?

Pralay is a quasi-ballistic surface-to-surface missile.The missile is designed to destroy enemy radar, communication installations, command centres and airfields.

Click here to read more

22. Five Eyes intelligence alliance backs Canada probe in Nijjar killing: What is it

Source: The post is based on the article **"Five Eyes intelligence alliance backs Canada probe in Nijjar killing: What is it"** published in **Hindustan Times on 19th September 2023**

What is the News?

Canada's charge about India's involvement in the killing of Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar was backed by the Five Eyes intelligence alliance.

What is the Five Eyes alliance?

Five Eyes is an alliance comprising Canada, the US, the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

These partner countries share a broad range of intelligence with one another in a unified multilateral arrangement.

These alliance countries are also parties to the multilateral UKUSA Agreement, which is a treaty focused on joint cooperation in signals intelligence.

India-Canada Relations:

Canada is home to nearly 1.4 million people of Indian ethnic or cultural origin, about 3.7% of the country's total population, according to the 2021 census.

More than 770,000 people reported their religion as Sikhism, about 2% of Canada's population.

In 2019, the Canadian government designated April as Sikh Heritage Month.

India was Canada's 10th largest two-way merchandise trade partner in 2022 with more than $13.7 billion in trade.

23. PM hails passage of The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023 in the Lok Sabha
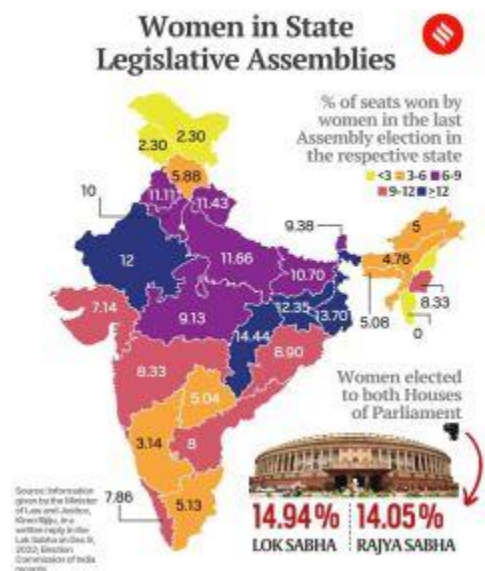
Source: The post is based on the article **"PM hails passage of The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023 in the Lok Sabha"** published in **PIB on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

The Prime Minister has welcomed the passage of The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023 in the Lok Sabha.

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Background:

Source: Indian Express

The 73rd and 74th Amendments passed in 1993 which introduced panchayats and municipalities in the Constitution, reserved one-third of seats for women in these bodies.

The Constitution also provides for reservation of seats in Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in proportion to their number in the population.

However, the Constitution does not provide for reservation of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.

Currently, 15% of the total members of the 17th Lok Sabha are women while in state legislative assemblies, women on average constitute 9% of the total members.

Bills amending the Constitution to reserve seats for women in Parliament and state legislative assemblies have been introduced in 1996, 1998, 1999, and 2008.The first three Bills lapsed with dissolution of their respective Lok Sabhas.

The 2008 Bill was introduced in and passed by Rajya Sabha but it also lapsed with the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha.

Now, the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023 was introduced in Lok Sabha.

What are the key provisions of Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023?

Reservation for women: The Bill reserves, as nearly as may be, one-third of all seats for women in Lok Sabha, state legislative assemblies, and the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. This will also apply to the seats reserved for SCs and STs in Lok Sabha and state legislatures.

Commencement of reservation: The reservation will be effective after the census conducted after the commencement of this Bill has been published.Based on the census, delimitation will be undertaken to reserve seats for women.

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– The reservation will be provided for a period of 15 years.However, it shall continue till such date as determined by a law made by Parliament.

Rotation of seats: Seats reserved for women will be rotated after each delimitation, as determined by a law made by Parliament.

24. Northeast's mithun gets 'food animal' tag and its meat a leg-up

Source: The post is based on the article "Northeast's mithun gets 'food animal' tag and its meat a leg-up" published in Indian Express on 21st September 2023

What is the News?

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has recognized Mithun as a 'food animal'.

This will help farmers and tribal village communities as they can now sell mithun meat for commercial purposes.

Until now, mithuns and their meat were sold only for very special occasions such as festivals or weddings.

What is Mithun?

Source: Indian Express

Scientific Name: Bos frontalis

Habitat: Mithun is a ruminant species of the Bovidae family found in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.

– It is also the state animal of both Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

Characteristics: Mithun is semi-domesticated and is reared in a free-range forest ecosystem.The animal is usually let loose in a community forest and has rarely required shelter or supplementary feeding except for salt.

– Since the soil in these parts is acidic and low in salt content, mithuns have an affinity for salt and are known to lick it off the hands of the farmers.

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Population: As of 2019, there are around 3.9 lakh mithuns in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.

Significance: Mithun is traditionally reserved for special occasions, which has in present times come to also include feasts given by election candidates.

Initiatives: Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has launched the M-ANITRA app to register mithun farmers as "buyers" and "sellers" with the aim to help them do business at competitive prices.

25. National Medical Commission Achieves Prestigious WFME Recognition Status for 10 Years

Source: The post is based on the article **"National Medical Commission Achieves Prestigious WFME Recognition Status for 10 Years"** published **in PIB on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has been granted the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) Recognition Status for a remarkable tenure of 10 years.

What is the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)?

The World Federation for Medical Education(WFME) is a global organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of medical education worldwide.

WFME's accreditation program plays a pivotal role in ensuring that medical institutes meet and uphold the highest international standards of education and training.

What is the National Medical Commission(NMC)?

NMC has been constituted by an act of Parliament known as National Medical Commission Act, 2019 which came into force in 2020.

Functions: (i) improve access to quality and affordable medical education, (ii) ensure availability of adequate and high quality medical professionals in all parts of the country; (iii) promote equitable and universal healthcare (iv) encourages medical professionals to adopt latest medical research in their work (v) objectively assess medical institutions periodically; (vi) maintain a medical register for India; (vi) enforce high ethical standards in all aspects of medical services; (vii) have an effective grievance redressal mechanism.

What are the benefits of NMC being granted the WFME Recognition Status?

Firstly, all the 706 existing medical colleges in India will now become WFME accredited and the new medical colleges that will be set up in the coming 10 years will automatically become WFME accredited.

Secondly, it will also enable Indian medical graduates to pursue postgraduate training and practice in other countries that require WFME recognition such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

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26. C-DOT and CSIR-National Physical laboratory sign agreement for 'Development of NavIC based IST traceable Primary Reference Time Clock for Telecom Sector'

Source: The post is based on the article **"C-DOT and CSIR-National Physical laboratory sign agreement for 'Development of NavIC based IST traceable Primary Reference Time Clock for Telecom Sector"** published in **PIB on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) and CSIR-National Physical laboratory (NPL) has signed an agreement for 'Development of NavIC based IST traceable Primary Reference Time Clock (PRTC) for Telecom Sector'.

The agreement is signed under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) scheme.

What is the Telecom Technology Development Fund(TTDF) scheme?

Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), a body under the Department of Telecommunications, had launched the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) Scheme in 2022.

Aim: To fund R&D in rural-specific communication technology applications and form synergies among academia, start-ups, research institutes, and the industry to build and develop the telecom ecosystem.

– To promote technology ownership and indigenous manufacturing, create a culture of technology co-innovation, reduce imports, boost export opportunities and create Intellectual Property.

Eligibility: The following Indian entities are only eligible for support from this fund: 1) Domestic Company(ies) with focus on telecom R&D, Use case development 2) Start-ups / MSMEs 3) Academic institutions 4) R&D institutions, Section 8 companies with focus on telecom research and development among others.

Technology domains: 1) 5G development under 'India 5G Stack' 2) 6G & Beyond technology development 3) IoT & M2M development 4) Other Telecom Technologies under various research programs 5) Entrepreneurship Cell (for early-stage Start-ups) and 5) Research Scholarship program.

27. Salient features and Guidelines of PM Vishwakarma Scheme

Source: The post is based on the article **"Salient features and Guidelines of PM Vishwakarma Scheme"** published in **PIB on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

The Prime Minister has launched the PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

What is the PM Vishwakarma Scheme?

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise.

Type: Central Sector Scheme

Aim: To provide end-to-end support to artisans and craftspeople who work with their hands and tools.

Coverage: The Scheme covers artisans and craftspeople engaged in 18 trades.

Benefits under the scheme:

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– **Recognition**: Recognition of artisans and craftspeople through PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card.

– **Skill Upgradation**: Basic Training of 5-7 days and Advanced Training of 15 days or more, with a stipend of Rs. 500 per day;

– **Toolkit Incentive**: A toolkit incentive of upto Rs. 15,000 in the form of e-vouchers at the beginning of Basic Skill Training.

– **Credit Support**: Collateral free 'Enterprise Development Loans' of upto Rs. 3 lakh in two tranches of Rs. 1 lakh and Rs. 2 lakh with tenures of 18 months and 30 months, respectively, at a concessional rate of interest fixed at 5%, with Government of India subvention to the extent of 8%.

– Beneficiaries who have completed Basic Training will be eligible to avail the first tranche of credit support of upto Rs. 1 lakh.The second loan tranche will be available to beneficiaries who have availed the 1st tranche and maintained a standard loan account and have adopted digital transactions in their business or have undergone Advanced Training.

– **Incentive for Digital Transaction**: An amount of Rs 1 per digital transaction, upto maximum 100 transactions monthly will be credited to the beneficiary's account for each digital pay-out or receipt.

– **Marketing Support**: Marketing support will be provided to the artisans and craftspeople in the form of quality certification, branding, onboarding on e-commerce platforms such as GeM, advertising, publicity and other marketing activities to improve linkage to value chain.

– **Recognition as entrepreneurs**: The scheme will onboard the beneficiaries on Udyam Assist Platform as 'entrepreneurs' in the formal MSME ecosystem.

28. Study throws light on how gravitational instabilities affect evolution of galaxies

Source: The post is based on the article **"Study throws light on how gravitational instabilities affect evolution of galaxies"** published in **The Hindu on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

A study conducted by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) could help understand how gravitational instabilities are connected to galaxy evolution.

What is the study conducted by Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) researchers?

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) conducted a study to explore the connection between gravitational instabilities and galaxy evolution.

They investigated how gravitational instabilities relate to star formation, gas content, growth time, and galaxy shapes.

They compared these factors in nearby galaxies and studied 175 galaxies from the Spitzer Photometry and Accurate Rotation Curves (SPARC) database.

They found that spiral galaxies like the Milky Way have higher star formation rates, lower stability, less gas, and faster gravitational instability growth.This suggests that gravitational instabilities in spirals quickly turn gas into stars, depleting gas reserves.

Researchers then compared stability levels in nearby galaxies with those observed at high redshift, which are precursors to galaxies in the local universe.

They found that galaxies with marginal stability levels experience intense, short-term star formation, depleting their gas reserves rapidly.

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Highly stable galaxies, on the other hand, have slower, long-term star formation, gradually converting available gas into stars.

What is the significance of this study?

The study not only contributes to the understanding of gravitational instabilities but also emphasizes the need for future investigations into the impact of these instabilities on the morphological evolution of galaxies across different redshifts.

29. ICMR nod to conduct Truenat test to detect Nipah

Source: The post is based on the article "**ICMR nod to conduct Truenat test to detect Nipah**" published in **The Hindu on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

Kerala has been given permission by the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) to use Truenat test to diagnose Nipah.

What is the Truenat Test?

Truenat is a chip-based, point-of-care, rapid molecular test for diagnosis of various diseases.

It is a portable, chip-based and battery-operated machine developed by Goa-based Molbio Diagnostics Private Limited.

Truenat tests use real-time micro polymerase chain reaction (PCR) technology.

This test has been approved by WHO and ICMR for TB diagnosis, Covid and other diseases.

Significance: Traditional RT-PCR tests can take up to eight hours to complete.

– The TrueNat tests used the same scientific principle used in RT-PCR tests, but the results can be achieved in half an hour.

30. All about Bima Sugam portal, a 'UPI moment' for insurance sector

Source: The post is based on the article "**All about Bima Sugam portal, a 'UPI moment' for insurance sector**" published in **Hindustan Times on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has formed a steering committee to act as the apex decision-making body for the creation of its ambitious 'Bima Sugam' online platform.

What is Bima Sugam?

Bima Sugam aims to simplify the process of purchasing insurance for consumers.

This online platform is where customers can choose a suitable scheme from multiple options given by various companies.

All insurance requirements, including those for life, health, and general insurance (including motor and travel) will be met by Bima Sugam.

Who will own the Bima Sugam platform?

Life insurance and general insurance companies will own a 47.5 per cent stake each, while brokers and agent bodies will own 2.5 per cent each.

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What are the benefits of the Bima Sugam platform?

The portal will provide the following benefits: 1) act as a centralized database 2) assist the insured/buyers in porting their respective policies based on coverage and pricing 3) give people a wide choice to pick and choose policies and view all their policies 4) reduce commission paid to intermediaries and 5) Settlement of claims and renewal of policies will also become faster as paperwork is reduced drastically, making it easier for the customers.

31. Panel suggests GPS trackers to reduce overcrowding in prisons

Source: The post is based on the article "**Panel suggests GPS trackers to reduce overcrowding in prisons**" published in **The Hindu on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

The Parliamentary Committee on Home Affairs has released a report titled 'Prison-Conditions, Infrastructure, and Reforms'.

What has been the status of Prisons in India?

According to the Prison Statistics published by the National Crime Record Bureau for 2021, there are 1,319 prisons in India with a total capacity of 4,25,609 prisoners.The actual inmates are 5,54,034 which shows that the occupancy capacity rate is 130.2%.

Of the total inmates, the number of undertrial prisoners is 4,27,165 and the number of convicted prisoners is 1,22,852.

The occupancy of women prisoners has been increased and the prisons are understaffed by approximately 30% of the required strength.

Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of undertrial prisoners, accounting for 21.21% of the country's total while Delhi has the highest percentage of undertrial prisoners, comprising 91% of its total inmate population.

Prisons are understaffed by approximately 30% of the required personnel.

What are the key recommendations given by the Parliamentary Committee on Home Affairs?

Use of Technology: Bail is often denied for three primary reasons: concerns that the undertrial prisoner might influence or intimidate witnesses, attempt to flee the country or commit additional crimes.

– To overcome this problem, the panel said that technology can be used to produce cost-effective bracelets or anklet trackers that can be worn by the prisoners who have procured bail and are out of prison on bail.

– However, this method should be used on a voluntary basis after procuring the consent of inmates.

Overcrowding of jails: The panel recommended that prisoners from overcrowded jails may be transferred to other jails with vacant cells in the same State or other States.

Lack of jamming capability: The panel highlighted the inadequate jamming capabilities in many State Prison Departments, with some only able to block 2G and 3G network signals.This lack of jamming technology has led to the frequent smuggling of mobile phones into prisons, posing a potential security hazard.

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32. India wins bid to host 17th International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement

Source: The post is based on the article **"India wins bid to host 17th International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement"** published in **PIB on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

India has won the bid to host the prestigious International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement (ICCC) at New Delhi in 2027.

What is the International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement(ICCC)?

International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement(ICCC) is the largest and most prestigious event of its kind which reviews the progress of research in the area of Cement and Concrete.

The congresses have been held generally at intervals of four to six years since 1918.

The 9th Congress was organized at New Delhi in 1992 by National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCCBM) and the present 16th ICCC is being held at Bangkok, Thailand.

What is the National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCCBM)?

National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCCBM) is an apex Research and Development organization under the administrative control of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

Purpose: It is dedicated to research, technology development & transfer, education & industrial services for cement, allied building materials & construction industries.

Significance: NCCBM has a proven track record of executing biennial NCB International Seminars/Conferences of similar magnitude, ensuring a seamless and memorable event.

India's Cement Industry:

India is the fifth largest economy and is likely to become third largest by the next five years.

India's cement industry is second largest in the world with installed cement capacity of 600 million tonnes.

The cement industry in India plays a key role in the circular economy framework in the country by utilizing various industrial wastes and is having one of the lowest CO_2 footprints and most energy efficient in the world.

33. ICG Pollution-Control Vessel 'Samudra Prahari' carries out Pollution Response Table-Top exercise with Thai officials at Khlong Toei Port in Bangkok

Source: The post is based on the article **"ICG Pollution-Control Vessel 'Samudra Prahari' carries out Pollution Response Table-Top exercise with Thai officials at Khlong Toei Port in Bangkok"** published in **PIB on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

The Indian Coast Guard Ship Samudra Prahari, a specialized Pollution Control Vessel, has embarked on an overseas deployment to ASEAN countries.

This initiative was announced during the ASEAN Defence Minister Meeting Plus meeting in Cambodia in November 2022.

During this deployment, the ship is scheduled to make port calls in Bangkok(Thailand), Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam), and Jakarta(Indonesia).

What is Samudra Prahari?

Indian Coast Guard's Samudra Prahari is a specialized Pollution Control Vessel.

Key Features: The ship is equipped with state-of-the-art pollution response and control equipment including containment equipment like Hi-Sprint Booms and river booms to prevent spread of oil spill, oil spill recovery devices such as skimmers and side sweeping arms and storage devices in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone.

– The ship is capable of unhindered oil recovery operations with storage capacity of 500 KL.

– The vessel is designed to operate twin-engine Advanced Light Helicopters and to operate and embark Chetak helicopter.

– The ship also has unmanned machinery operation capability also.

34. Government comes out with a new set of National Awards in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation known as "Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar"

Source: The post is based on the article **"Government comes out with a new set of National Awards in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation known as "Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar"** published in **PIB on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

The Government of India has come out with a new set of National Awards in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation known as "Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar".

What are Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar Awards?

Objective: To recognize the notable and inspiring contribution made by the scientists, technologists, and innovators individually or in teams in various fields of science, technology and technology- led innovation.

Eligibility: Scientists/ technologists/innovators working in government, private sector organizations or any individual working outside any organization, who have made distinguished contributions in terms of path-breaking research or innovation or discovery in any field of science, technology, or technology- led innovation shall be eligible for the awards.

– People of Indian Origin staying abroad with exceptional contributions benefiting the Indian communities or society shall also be eligible for the awards.

Categories: The awards shall be given in following four categories:

– **Vigyan Ratna(VR)** award will recognize lifetime achievements & contributions made in any field of science and technology.

– **Vigyan Shri (VS)** award will recognize distinguished contributions in any field of science and technology.

– **Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB)** award will recognize & encourage young scientists up to the age of 45 years who made an exceptional contribution in any field of science and technology.

– **Vigyan Team (VT)** award to be given to a team of three or more scientists/ researchers/ innovators who have made an exceptional contribution working in a team in any field of science and technology.

Domains: The awards shall be given in the 13 domains, namely Physics, Chemistry, Biological Sciences, Mathematics & Computer Science, Earth Science, Medicine, Engineering Sciences,

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Agricultural Science, Environmental Science, Technology & Innovation, Atomic Energy, Space Science and Technology, and Others.

Committee: All nominations received for the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar awards shall be placed before the **Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar Committee (RVPC)** to be headed by the **Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) t**o Government of India and comprising Secretaries of Science Departments, members of Science and Engineering Academies and some distinguished scientists and technologists from different fields of science and technology.

Nominations and awards ceremony: The nominations for the awards will be invited every year on **14th January** which would remain open till **28th February (National Science Day)** every year.

– These awards shall be announced on **11th May (National Technology Day)** every year.The Award Ceremony for all categories of awards will be held on **23rd August (National Space Day)**.All Awards will have a Sanad & a medal.

35. China, U.S. and India absent at U.N.'s Climate Ambition Summit

Source: The post is based on the article **"China, U.S. and India absent at U.N.'s Climate Ambition Summit"** published in **The Hindu on 22nd September 2023**

What is the News?

The Climate Ambition Summit (CAS) held in New York, as part of the United Nations General Assembly has been concluded.

What is the Climate Ambition Summit?

Convened by: The United Nations Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Purpose: The Summit represents a critical political milestone for demonstrating that there is collective global will to accelerate the pace and scale of a just transition to a more equitable renewable-energy based, climate-resilient global economy.

Criteria for speaking at the summit: The criteria for countries to be considered for a speaking slot at the summit were that they would be expected to **1) p**resent updated pre-2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (as agreed in Glasgow) **2)** updated net-zero targets **3)** energy transition plans with commitments to no new coal, oil and gas **4)** fossil fuel phase-out plans **5)** more ambitious renewable energy targets **6)** Green Climate Fund pledges and **7)** economy-wide plans on adaptation and resilience.

What are the key highlights from the Climate Ambition Summit?

The summit was marked by the absence of major economies whose actions significantly influence the future of global emissions.

For instance, China, the U.S and India — which collectively account for about 42% of global greenhouse gas emissions and are the top three emitters in that order — were all absent from the summit.

India's neighbours Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan were among the listed speakers at the summit.The European Union, Germany, France and Canada also attended the summit.

What is India's last Climate pledge?

India last updated its climate pledges in 2022.Its pledges were: **1)** reducing emissions intensity — or the volume of emissions per unit of gross domestic product (GDP) — by 45% from 2005 levels by 2030, a 10% increase from what it agreed to in 2015 **2)** meet 50% of its electric power

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needs from renewable, non-fossil fuel energy sources — up from 40% committed at the Paris agreement and **3)** create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of Co2-equivalent [GtCO2e] through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

36. Government launches Innovative Mobile Application and Web Portal for General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES) to Revolutionize Farming Practices

Source: The post is based on the article **"Government launches Innovative Mobile Application and Web Portal for General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES) to Revolutionize Farming Practices"** published in **PIB on 21st September 2023**

What is the News?

Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare(DA&FW) has launched the mobile application and the web portal for GCES (General Crop Estimation Survey).

What is the General Crop Estimation Survey(GCES)?

Estimates of crop production are obtained by multiplying the area under crop and the yield rate.

The yield rate estimates are based on scientifically designed crop cutting experiments conducted under the General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES).

What are the key features of the mobile application and the web portal for GCES (General Crop Estimation Survey)?

Comprehensive Information: The portal and the app provide a comprehensive repository of yield estimation including village wise GCES plan and plot details where the crop cutting experiments are conducted, post harvesting crop weight and driage weight of the crop.

Geo-referencing: Geo-referencing is one of the key features of the mobile application, which enables the primary worker to draw the boundary of the experimental plot and upload photos of the plot as well as of the crops through it.This feature will ensure transparency and accuracy of the data as well.

What are the key challenges addressed by GCES Web Portal and Mobile Application?

Delay in Reporting: Till date data collection, compilation and yield estimation is a completely manual process which causes delay in reporting by states.

– In the new process, the field data will be collected using GPS enabled mobile application and will be stored in the server which ensures on time reporting of crop statistics.

Transparency: GPS enabled devices provide precise latitude and longitude coordinates for data collection points. This information ensures that data is linked to specific geographic locations, leaving no room for ambiguity or manipulation of data regarding where it was collected.

37. Rajya Sabha clears women's reservation bill unanimously

Source: The post is based on the article **"Rajya Sabha clears women's reservation bill unanimously"** published in **The Hindu on 22nd September 2023**

What is the News?

Parliament has passed the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023 or the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam.

The Bill seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

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What are the key provisions of Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023?

Click Here to read

What is the participation of women in Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies?

Parliament: Women's representation in Lok Sabha has increased from 5% in the first Lok Sabha to 15% in the current Lok Sabha.

Currently, 15% of Lok Sabha MPs and 13% of Rajya Sabha MPs are women.

The highest proportion of women representatives elected to Lok Sabha so far was in the 2019 elections, but it was nearly 15% of total membership while the highest proportion of women representatives to Rajya Sabha stood at 12.7% in 2014.

Among parties with more than 10 seats in Lok Sabha, 42% of Biju Janata Dal(BJD) MPs and 39% of Trinamool Congress(TMC) MPs are women. In Rajya Sabha, 17% of Indian National Congress (INC) MPs are women.

State Assemblies: No state has more than 20% women representation in its Assembly .Chhattisgarh has the highest representation with 18% women MLAs while Himachal Pradesh has just one woman MLA and Mizoram has none.

38. Rare metal Vanadium, key for batteries, discovered in India's Gujarat

Source: The post is based on the article **"Rare metal Vanadium, key for batteries, discovered in India's Gujarat"** published in **All India Radio on 22nd September 2023**

What is the News?

Vanadium, a rare metal, has been discovered from the Gulf of Khambhat in Gujarat.

What is Vanadium?

Vanadium is a medium-hard, steel-blue metal.It rarely exists as a free element in nature but can be found in about 65 different minerals, including magnetite, vanadinite, carnotite and patronite.

Largest Producer: Brazil is the world's largest exporter of vanadium followed by Russia and South Africa.Brazil alone is responsible for nearly one-quarter of the metal's global export market.

– China has the highest vanadium reserves in the world

Applications of Vanadium:

Vanadium is used primarily as an alloying element in Iron & Steel Industry as it imparts toughness and strength to steel.

Modern applications of vanadium include its use as vanadium secondary batteries for power plants and rechargeable vanadium redox batteries(VRB) for commercial applications.

– The main advantages of vanadium redox batteries(VRB) are 1) It can offer almost unlimited capacity simply by using sequentially larger storage tanks 2) can be left completely discharged for long periods of time with no ill effects 3) can be recharged by replacing the electrolyte if no power source is available to charge it 4) suffers no permanent damage if the electrolytes are accidentally mixed and 5) has also been shown to have the least ecological impact of all energy storage technologies.

Defence and aerospace: Vanadium holds significant importance as a crucial raw material in strategic domains like defense and aerospace.

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– For example, alloys combining vanadium with titanium and aluminum are employed in the manufacturing of components for jet engines and high-speed aircraft frames.

39. Department of Fisheries is promoting Artificial Reef (AR) under PMMSY for rejuvenating coastal fisheries

Source: The post is based on the article **"Department of Fisheries is promoting Artificial Reef (AR) under PMMSY for rejuvenating coastal fisheries"** published in **PIB on 23rd September 2023**

What is the News?

The Department of Fisheries has approved 732 artificial reef units for 10 coastal states.

This initiative falls under the "Integrated Modern Coastal Fishing Villages" program which is part of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

The projects are being implemented with the technical support of Fishery Survey of India(FSI) and ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute(CMFRI).

What is an Artificial Reef?

An artificial reef is a sheltered human-built structure, placed on the seabed as a substitute for natural habitats.

They represent innovative engineering interventions designed to restore and enhance natural habitats, boost productivity, and efficiently manage aquatic resources.

What are the advantages of Artificial Reef?

Fish Aggregation and Habitat: Artificial reefs, similar to their natural counterparts, serve as gathering points for fish, providing them with a habitat to thrive. These structures also mitigate wave damage along the coasts, facilitate marine ecosystem regeneration and act as carbon sinks.

Marine Life Support: These reefs provide a solid substrate for various marine life forms, including corals, algae, and plankton, to attach and grow. They create favorable conditions for sea ranching and serve as crucial spawning and nursery grounds for fish.

Recreational and Ecotourism Opportunities: Artificial reefs enhance recreational fisheries and create suitable areas for activities like snorkeling and diving. This not only contributes to local tourism but also reduces conflicts over fishing grounds.

Environmental Conservation: These structures help restrict bottom trawling in nearshore areas, aiding marine ecosystem regeneration. Small-scale fishermen also benefit from higher catch rates.

Support for Non-Mechanized Boats: A single artificial reef unit of 300m3 is expected to support 25-30 non-mechanized boats, further boosting the livelihoods of traditional fishermen.

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40. Haryana to bring down fire counts substantially as per the Haryana State Action Plan submitted to CAQM

Source: The post is based on the article **"Haryana to bring down fire counts substantially as per the Haryana State Action Plan submitted to CAQM"** published in **PIB on 23rd September 2023**

What is the News?

Commission for Air Quality Management, (CAQM) has directed the State Government concerned to ensure effective, intensified and strict enforcement of the District Plans and State Action Plan with special focus on hotspot districts to eliminate stubble burning in the States.

What is the Commission for Air Quality Management(CAQM)?

CAQM has been set up under the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act,2021.

The Commission has been setup for better coordination, research, identification, and resolution of problems related to air quality in the National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas.

Adjoining areas have been defined as areas in Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, adjoining the National Capital Territory of Delhi and NCR, where any source of pollution may cause adverse impact on air quality in the NCR.

The act also dissolved the Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority established in the NCR in 1998.

Composition: The Commission will consist of: (i) a Chairperson, (ii) an officer of the rank of a Joint Secretary as the member-secretary and Chief Coordinating Officer, (iii) a serving or former Joint Secretary from the central government, (iii) three independent technical members with expertise in air pollution, and (iv) three members from non-government organizations.

– The Chairperson and members of the Commission will have a tenure of three years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier.

Functions of the Commission: Functions of the Commission include: (i) coordinating actions by concerned state governments (Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh), (ii) planning and executing plans to prevent and control air pollution in NCR, (iii) providing a framework for identifying air pollutants, (iv) conducting research and development through networking with technical institutions, (v) training and creating a special workforce to deal with issues related to air pollution, and (vi) preparing action plans such as increasing plantation and addressing stubble burning.

Powers of the Commission: Powers of the Commission include: (i) restricting activities influencing air quality, (ii) investigating and conducting research related to environmental pollution impacting air quality, (iii) preparing codes and guidelines to prevent and control air pollution, and (iv) issuing directions on matters including inspections, or regulation which will be binding on the concerned person or authority.

– The Commission will be the sole authority with jurisdiction over matters defined in the Act such as air quality management).In case of conflicts, directions of the Commission will prevail over the orders of the respective state governments, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), state PCBs, and state-level statutory bodies.

Penalties: Contravention of provisions of the Act or orders and directions of the Commission will be punishable with imprisonment of up to five years, or fine of up to one crore rupees, or both. The act excludes farmers from the scope of these penalties.

– However, the Commission may collect environmental compensation from farmers causing pollution by stubble burning. This compensation will be prescribed by the central government.

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– Appeals against the Commission's orders will lie with the National Green Tribunal.

41. Indian naval ship Sahyadri participates in the maiden India-Indonesia-Australia Trilateral Maritime Exercise

Source: The post is based on the article **"Indian naval ship Sahyadri participates in the maiden India-Indonesia-Australia Trilateral Maritime Exercise"** published in **PIB on 23rd September 2023**

What is the News?

Indian Navy's indigenously built warship INS Sahyadri has participated in the maiden trilateral Maritime Partnership Exercise with the ships and aircraft from the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and Indonesian Navy.

What is the purpose of this Trilateral exercise?

The trilateral exercise aimed to bolster the partnership between India, Australia, and Indonesia, fostering a collective effort to enhance stability, peace, and security in the Indo-Pacific region.

It also offered an invaluable opportunity for the participating navies to share their knowledge and expertise.

What is INS Sahyadri?

INS Sahyadri is the third ship of the indigenously designed and built Project-17 class multi-role stealth frigates.

It was built at Mazagon Dock Ltd, Mumbai.

What are the other exercises between India and Indonesia?

Exercise Samudra Shakti: It is a bilateral maritime exercise between India and Indonesia.It aims to strengthen the bilateral relationship, enhance mutual understanding and interoperability in maritime operations between the two navies.

Exercise Garuda Shakti: It is an annual military exercise between the Indian and Indonesian Army. It is conducted on a reciprocal basis and its first edition was conducted in the year 2012 in India.

IND-INDO CORPAT: It is a bi-annual coordinated naval patrol exercise conducted along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) by the Indian and Indonesian Navy.

What are the other exercises between India and Australia?

Exercise AUSTRA HIND: It is a bilateral training exercise between the Indian Army and the Australian Army.

Exercise Pitch Black: It is a biennial multilateral air combat exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force(RAAF) since 1981.The Indian Air Force had taken part in the exercise for the first time in 2018.

AUSINDEX: It is a biennial bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy(RAN). The first edition of the exercise took place in 2015.

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42. Sports Minister will skip Asiad inaugural as China bars entry of Arunachal players

Source: The post is based on the article **"Sports Minister will skip Asiad inaugural as China bars entry of Arunachal players"** published in **The Hindu on 23rd September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Sports Minister has canceled his visit to the Asian Games, due to China's denial of entry to Indian Wushu players from Arunachal Pradesh.

What has happened between India and China?

The Asian Games is being held in China.The Asian Games protocol provided accreditation cards that served as visas for entry into China, rather than requiring visas on their passports.

But three players from Arunachal Pradesh with valid e-accreditations were denied entry into China.

India protested strongly against China's deliberate discrimination and selective obstruction of its sportspersons from Arunachal Pradesh.

On the other hand, Chinese authorities claimed they issued visas, but Indian athletes didn't accept them.China also reaffirmed its position of not recognizing Arunachal Pradesh as part of India.

What other similar incidents have happened between India and China?

Recently, three members of the Wushu team belonging to Arunachal Pradesh were given "stapled visas" or paper visas on their passports to attend the World University Games in China.India had then also said that any attempt to distinguish them from other Indians was "unacceptable", and put their visit on hold.

In 2022, India had announced a diplomatic boycott of the Winter Olympics in Beijing, after the Chinese government decided to field a People's Liberation Army soldier, who had been decorated for his role in the 2020 Galwan clashes with Indian soldiers, as a torch-bearer during the Olympic flame run.

43. Panel calls for revising rules of construction around protected ASI monuments

Source: The post is based on the article **"Panel calls for revising rules of construction around protected ASI monuments"** published in **The Hindu on 23rd September 2023**

What is the News?

The Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport Tourism and Culture has called for revising rules of construction around protected Archaeological Survey of India(ASI) monuments.

What are the rules of construction around protected ASI monuments?

The prohibited and restricted area provision was introduced in 2010 through an amendment to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958.

It prohibits and regulates all activities like mining and construction around 100 metres and 300 metres.

What are the observations made by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport Tourism and Culture on this?

The committee has observed that the provision of 100-metre prohibited area and 300-metre regulated area around all monuments protected by the ASI has pitted the local community

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against these heritage structures in many places as they find it difficult to carry out necessary repair work of their residential spaces.

The committee has asked the government to revise the rules to make them realistic.It has also recommended rationalizing the application of such rules based on the historical significance of the monuments.

The committee has also recommended that the list of all 3,691 ASI-protected monuments be rationalized and categorized based on their national significance, unique architectural value and specific heritage content.

44. India's First Lighthouse Festival begins in Goa from Tomorrow

Source: The post is based on the article **"India's First Lighthouse Festival begins in Goa from Tomorrow"** published in **PIB on 23rd September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways is going to inaugurate India's First Lighthouse Festival from the Fort Aguada Lighthouse in Panjim, Goa.

What is a Lighthouse?

A Lighthouse is a tower, building, or other type of physical structure designed to emit light from a system of lamps and lenses and to serve as a beacon for navigational aid, for maritime pilots at sea or on inland waterways.

What is India's first ever Lighthouse Festival?

To be held at: Fort Aguada in Goa

Purpose: It would be a three day event in carnival style with local artists, dance troupes, food and culinary stalls, music concerts and similar activities to attract common people to Lighthouses.

What is the Lighthouse Heritage Tourism campaign?

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways is planning to develop lighthouses into tourist hubs across the country under the 'Lighthouse Heritage Tourism' campaign.

The campaign will be undertaken under the Public–Private Partnership(PPP) model.

As part of the campaign, old lighthouses will be given a new life and 75 lighthouses across the country will be developed into tourist hubs and developed on the lines of those in Europe and America.

45. Madhya Pradesh CM unveils Adi Shankaracharya statue at Omkareshwar: Its story, significance

Source: The post is based on the article **"Madhya Pradesh CM unveils Adi Shankaracharya statue at Omkareshwar: Its story, significance"** published in **Indian Express on 23rd September 2023**

What is the News?

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister has unveiled the 108-foot-tall 'Statue of Oneness' of Adi Shankaracharya at Omkareshwar, Madhya Pradesh.

The statue depicts Shankaracharya as a 12-year-old child when he is said to have visited Omkareshwar.

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Note: The Government of Madhya Pradesh has invested a lot to develop the Omkareshwar town located on the **Mandhata island** which will form an important tourism circuit, along with Ujjain, Maheshwar and Mandu religious towns.

Who was Adi Shankaracharya?

Adi Shankara is believed to have lived between 788 and 820 AD.He was born in Kerela's Kaladi, situated on the bank of the Periyar River.

He became a sanyasin at an early age and went to Omkareshwar.He then studied under his guru Govinda Bhagavatpada.

Philosophy and works of Adi Shankaracharya:

Non-Dualism (Advaita Vedanta): Shankaracharya's central philosophy revolved around the concept of "Brahman," the ultimate reality or cosmic consciousness, being the only true and unchanging reality.He argued that the individual self (Atman) is ultimately identical with Brahman and that the perceived duality of the world is an illusion (maya). This non-dualistic perspective is a cornerstone of Advaita Vedanta.

Writings: Shankaracharya is known for his extensive writings and commentaries on various Hindu scriptures, particularly the Vedas, Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita.

– His commentaries helped to clarify and systematize the teachings of Advaita Vedanta. Some of his most famous works include the "Brahma Sutra Bhashya," the "Vivekachudamani," and the "Atma Bodha".

Travel: He is said to have visited all the important spiritual centres of the time — from Kanchi (Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu) to Kamrup (Assam), and Kashmir and the Kedar and Badri dhams, as well as Sringeri, Ujjain, Kashi, Puri, and Joshimath.

Why is Mandhata island considered an important religious destination?

The Mandhata island on the Narmada River is an important religious destination because it houses two of the 12 Jyotirlingas, which are considered sacred manifestations of Lord Shiva.

One of these Jyotirlingas is called Omkareshwara and the other is Amareshwara.The island is also close to the Mahakaleshwara Jyotirlinga in Ujjain.

The island is adorned with Shaivite, Vaishnavite, and Jain temples dating back to the 14th and 18th centuries.

The name 'Omkareshwar' is derived from the shape of the island, which resembles the sacred syllable 'Om', and its name means 'the Lord of Omkara'.

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