



Factly Compilation

September, 2023

Factly Compilation for the Month of September 2023

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1. Centre's DIKSHA e-education platform to offer AI help

Source: The post is based on the article “**Centre's DIKSHA e-education platform to offer AI help**” published in **The Hindu on 4th September 2023**

What is the News?

The National e-Governance Division (NeGD) of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in India is planning to integrate Personalized Adaptive Learning (PAL) into its existing Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) platform.

What is Personalized Adaptive Learning(PAL)?

It is a software-based approach that will allow each student to have an individualized learning experience over the course of the curriculum based on their unique needs and abilities.

What is DIKSHA Platform?

DIKSHA is an initiative of the Ministry of Education for digital online education.

It provides quality e-content for school education in States/UTs and QR coded Energized Textbooks for all grades.

It also has embedded assistive technologies for learners with visual or hearing impairments.

Apart from this, DIKSHA also hosts 2.43 lakh contributions by 11,624 academics by way of teaching videos, explainers and practice questions.

How will integration of PAL with DIKSHA platform help?

The integration of PAL into DIKSHA is expected to revolutionize the platform by leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to cater to the specific learning needs of students.

For example, if a student of Class 9 is learning the Pythagoras theorem and makes a calculation mistake, the AI learning system flags it and loops the student back to a basic video of how to make the calculation.

What are the challenges in integration of PAL with DIKSHA platform?

Building PAL is a massive exercise. Content from across subjects will have to be categorized and different chunks will have to be tagged. New content may also have to be created.

The initial focus of the government is likely to be on subjects like chemistry, mathematics, and physics for Classes 9 to 12.

Several states like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, and Haryana have experimented with PAL with the help of private players but are facing budget constraints.

2. Aarogya Maitri Cube: India Builds World's First Portable Hospital to Keep 200 Survivors Alive for 48 Hrs

Source: The post is based on the article “**Aarogya Maitri Cube: India Builds World's First Portable Hospital to Keep 200 Survivors Alive for 48 Hrs**” published in **News18 on 4th September 2023**

What is the News?

India has built the world's first disaster hospital that can be airlifted, packed in 72 cubes. It has been named as 'Aarogya Maitri Cube'.

What is Aarogya Maitri Cube?

Aarogya Maitri Cube is the world's first disaster hospital that can be airlifted.

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It has been developed indigenously under the **Project BHISHM** (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita and Maitri).

It has been developed as part of India's '**Aarogya Maitri**' initiative to provide essential medical supplies to friendly countries.

Key Features: Aarogya Maitri Cube is packed in 72 cubes. These cubes contain essential equipment and supplies, such as an operation theater, a mini-ICU, ventilators, blood test equipment, an X-ray machine, a cooking station, food, water, shelter, a power generator, and more.

– The special cage can hold 36 mini-cubes filled with supplies needed for 100 people to survive for two days.

– There are two of these cages, called master cubes, which can be joined to support 200 survivors. One of the major features of these cubes is their ability to handle various severe injuries, including bullet injuries, major bleeds etc.

3. G20 THINQ

Source: The post is based on the article "**G20 THINQ**" published in **PIB on 4th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Indian Navy has launched the second edition of The Indian Navy Quiz "G20 THINQ".

What is G20 THINQ?

G20 THINQ is a national and international quiz competition that brings together youth from different regions and geographies, and enables them to build lasting friendships in the spirit of 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam' – world is one family.

Conducted by: Indian Navy under the aegis of the G20 Secretariat and in partnership with NWWA (Navy Welfare and Wellness Association) and will have two levels National and International.

Levels: The competition comprises two levels: the national round and the international round.

– The National Round of the G20 THINQ will see participation of school children studying in Classes IX to XII.

– The International Round will see the participation of teams from G20+9 nations, each team comprising two students.

Significance: G20 THINQ will serve as a remarkable finale to India's Presidency that witnessed many unique achievements of the G20 at the global level.

4. As UPI crosses 10 billion transactions-mark, a look at India's key foreign policy sell: Digital public infra

Source: The post is based on the article "**As UPI crosses 10 billion transactions-mark, a look at India's key foreign policy sell: Digital public infra**" published in **Indian Express on 4th September 2023**

What is the News?

Digital public infrastructure (DPI) has been a key part of the government's overall narrative about India throughout its G20 presidency.

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During the G20 digital economy ministers' meeting in Bengaluru earlier this month, Prime Minister said that India is an "ideal testing lab" for solutions that can be replicated globally anywhere in the world.

What is Digital public infrastructure(DPI)?

Digital public infrastructure (DPI) refers to blocks or platforms such as digital identification, payment infrastructure and data exchange solutions that help countries deliver essential services to their people, empowering citizens and improving lives by enabling digital inclusion.

What is India's Digital public infrastructure (DPI)?

India's Digital public infrastructure (DPI) is known as **India Stack**. It is the name used to describe a collection of disparate technology products and frameworks. The components of this collection are owned and maintained by different agencies.

The overall architecture of India Stack has three key layers – identity, payments, and data management.

Digital Identity: It is centered around Aadhaar, India's national identity program. It can be used to remotely authenticate via two-factor or biometric authentication, receive digitally signed records such as driver's licenses, educational diplomas, and insurance policies, and sign documents or messages using a government-backed digital signature service.

Real-time fast payment system: UPI forms the second layer as it is designed to enable interoperability between money custodians, payment rails and front-end payment applications. The technology, which is in the custody of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has been licenced to several third-party private entities such as PhonePe, Google Pay and Paytm.

Data Management: It focuses on creating a new model for data governance. It operates as per a policy called the Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA), which at its core has the institution of a consent management system — which will allow the sharing of the information — with a view to provide better financial, health and telecom-related products and services to individuals and firms.

How is India Stack part of India's Foreign Policy?

India has launched the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) partnership to enable countries, especially low and middle-income brackets, to learn from its experiences in harnessing technology to improve governance, and for social, economic, digital and sustainable development.

India also introduced the idea to form an alliance of countries called One Future Alliance which would allow like-minded nations to use technology to improve people's lives.

India signed MoUs with Armenia, Sierra Leone, and Suriname to share its successful digital solutions implemented at scale through the India Stack.

Draft Public Key Infrastructure(PKI) Mutual Recognition Framework has also been released by the Ministry of Electronics & IT, Government of India with an aim to take the lead on the subject of implementation and adoption of India's DPI beyond the country's borders

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5. “Sunshine moment for India,” says Union Minister as PSLV-XL launches India’s first Solar Mission

Source: The post is based on the article “Sunshine moment for India,” says Union Minister as PSLV-XL launches India’s first Solar Mission” published in PIB on 4th September 2023

What is the News?

Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-XL) has launched India’s first Solar Mission, – Aditya L1 from Sriharikota Range.

What is Aditya L1?



Source: TOI

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

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

– A satellite placed in the halo orbit around the L1 point has the major advantage of continuously viewing the Sun without any occultation/eclipses. This will provide a greater advantage of observing the solar activities and its effect on space weather in real time.

Payloads: The spacecraft carries seven payloads to observe the photosphere, chromosphere and the outermost layers of the Sun (the corona) using electromagnetic and particle and magnetic field detectors.

– Using the special vantage point L1, four payloads directly view the Sun. The remaining three payloads carry out in-situ studies of particles and fields at the Lagrange point L1, thus providing important scientific studies of the propagatory effect of solar dynamics in the interplanetary medium.

Significance: The Aditya L1 Mission is expected to provide the most crucial information to understand the problem of coronal heating, coronal mass ejection, pre-flare and flare activities and their characteristics, dynamics of space weather, propagation of particles and fields etc.

How will Aditya L1 be placed in the L1 orbit?

Initial Orbit: The spacecraft was initially placed in a Low Earth Orbit.

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Elliptical Orbit: The orbit will then be adjusted to become more elliptical.

Exit from Earth's Gravitational Sphere of Influence (SOI): The spacecraft will be propelled towards the L1 point using onboard propulsion. As the spacecraft moves towards the Lagrange point, it will exit Earth's gravitational Sphere of Influence.

Cruise Phase: After leaving Earth's SOI, the cruise phase of the mission will commence.

Halo Orbit: Subsequently, the spacecraft will be injected into a large halo orbit around the Lagrange point (L1).

6. Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying lays the Foundation Stone for the establishment of Multi-Purpose Seaweed Park in Tamil Nadu

Source: The post is based on the article **“Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying lays the Foundation Stone for the establishment of Multi-Purpose Seaweed Park in Tamil Nadu”** published in **PIB on 4th September 2023**

What is the News?

On the third day of the [Sagar Parikrama](#), the Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying laid the Foundation Stone for the establishment of a Multi-Purpose Seaweed Park in Tamil Nadu.

What is Seaweed?

[Click Here to read](#)

What is a Multi-Purpose Seaweed Park?

Established in: Tamil Nadu

Announced in: In the Union Budget 2021, the Finance Minister had announced the proposal to set up 'Multipurpose Seaweed Park in Tamil Nadu'.

Objectives: To promote seaweed cultivation for creation of employment opportunity for coastal fisher youth and fisher women.

- To develop value-added seaweed products by encouraging private sector/ entrepreneurs and supporting them in setting up seaweed processing units in the seaweed park.
- Development of seaweed seed bank in collaboration with research institutes, universities, private entrepreneurs and fisheries department
- Exploration of untapped seaweed potential in the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu through scientific and traditional seaweed farming and development of R&D centres for production of quality seaweed.

Key Features: The seaweed park will provide a single window support for the entrepreneurs, processors etc. to access information on schemes, licenses/approvals required, while also providing space to set up processing centres.

7. DPIIT holds review meeting for wider adoption of PM GatiShakti National Master Plan in States/UTs

Source: The post is based on the article **“DPIIT holds review meeting for wider adoption of PM GatiShakti National Master Plan in States/UTs”** published in **PIB on 3rd September 2023**

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What is the News?

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has conducted a review meeting with States and Union Territories to promote broader utilization of the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (NMP).

What is the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (NMP)?

Launched in: 2021

Aim: To break the inter-ministerial tangles and silos and foster cooperation and integration in the fasttrack implementation of projects.

Objectives: 1) smooth multimodal connectivity 2) enhanced prioritization and optimal usage of resources to create capacities on time and 3) resolution of issues like standardization, disjointed planning and clearances.

Targets:

- The national highway network will be extended to expand the limit of roadways and touch the 2 lakh-km mark.
- Making of around 200 new airports, heliports, and water aerodromes to support aviation.
- The limit of railways to move cargo will be expanded to around 1,600 tons by FY25.
- The transmission network for power will be extended to 454,200 circuit km for easy access.
- Increment renewable capacity to 225 GW by FY25 and complete around 17,000 km of gas pipelines.

What are the benefits of PM Gati Shakti?

- It lays out a centralized portal to unite the infrastructural initiatives of 16 central ministries and departments.
- Optimized Route Planning
- Enhanced visibility of intersections from forest, economic zones, archaeological sites etc.
- Enabling time and cost saving for planning and implementation of infrastructure projects, such as, use of digital surveys on NMP to streamline the preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPR) with higher accuracy.
- It will create employment potential for a large number of individuals.

8. The northern plains of India is the most polluted region

Source: The post is based on the article “**The northern plains of India is the most polluted region**” published in **The Hindu on 4th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Air Quality Life Index 2021 has been released.

What is the Air Quality Life Index?

Released by: Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC)

Purpose: It is a pollution index that quantifies the relationship between long-term exposure to particulate pollution and life expectancy.

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What are the key findings of the Air Quality Life Index?

Pollution and Life expectancy: Pollution remains the foremost external threat to human health around the world.

– Its impact on life expectancy rivals that of smoking, surpassing alcohol use, unsafe water, and even exceeding car crash injuries.

– If the world were to permanently reduce fine particulate pollution (PM_{2.5}) to meet the World Health Organization's (WHO) guideline, the average person would add 2.3 years onto their life expectancy.

South Asia: South Asia is home to the four most polluted countries in the world and nearly a quarter of the global population.

– Between 2013 to 2021, particulate pollution in South Asia surged by 9.7%, which is estimated to reduce life expectancy in the region by an additional six months.

Most polluted countries in the world: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan where 22.9% of the global population lives are the four most polluted countries in the world.

– In Bangladesh, people potentially lost an average of 6.8 years of life due to air pollution not meeting WHO guidelines. In contrast, the average person from the U.S. lost just 3.6 months.

China: China stands out due to its success in reducing pollution by a staggering 42.3% from 2013 to 2021 and extending the average life expectancy of its population by 2.2 years. This reduction can be attributed to the country's policy initiatives to combat pollution in 2014.

India: India is the second-most polluted country in the world in 2021.

– The average Indian resident is set to lose 5.3 years of life expectancy if WHO guidelines remain unmet. In contrast, cardiovascular diseases reduce the average Indian's life expectancy by about 4.5 years, while child and maternal malnutrition reduces it by 1.8 years.

– **Delhi is the world's most polluted city.** If the PM_{2.5} level in Delhi is reduced to meet the WHO guideline, a resident in Delhi could gain 11.9 years in life expectancy.

– **Northern plains**, which is home to over half a billion people and 38.9% of India's population, **is the most polluted region.**

– The northern plains include the States and Union Territories of Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

– In the northern plains, the average resident is set to lose about 8 years of life expectancy if pollution levels persist and policies do not succeed in reducing pollution to levels as prescribed by the WHO.

9. Thrissur rocks to the rhythm of Pulikkali

Source: The post is based on the article “**Thrissur rocks to the rhythm of Pulikkali**” published in **The Hindu on 3rd September 2023**

What is the News?

The traditional folk dance of Kerala 'Pulikkali' was performed on the occasion of Onam.

What is Pulikkali?

Pulikkali (Tiger Dance) is one of the folk art forms of Kerala.

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The artists wear a tiger mask, paint their bodies like tigers and dance to the rhythm of traditional percussion instruments such as thakil, udukku and chenda.

It is performed on the fourth day of Onam festival.

It is believed to have originated two centuries ago as a street dance form and became part of Onam celebrations later.

It is said to have been introduced by the erstwhile ruler of Cochin, Maharaja Rama Varma Sakthan Thampuran.

The main theme of this folk art is tiger hunting with participants playing the role of tiger and hunter.

Usually, men and children perform this art form. For the first time, 3 women among a 51-member team participated in the Pulikali at Thrissur in 2016.

10. ASI's "Adopt a Heritage 2.0 programme" Indian Heritage app launched

Source: The post is based on the article "ASI's "Adopt a Heritage 2.0 programme" Indian Heritage app launched " published in **PIB on 4th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has launched the "Adopt a Heritage 2.0" programme and Indian Heritage app.

What is Adopt a Heritage Programme?

Adopt a Heritage Programme was launched in 2017 under the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the ASI.

Under this programme, corporate stakeholders were invited to adopt from over 3,000 protected monuments spread across the country.

What is Adopt a Heritage 2.0 Programme?

'Adopt a Heritage 2.0', is the upgraded version of 'Adopt a Heritage' programme.

The programme encourages corporate stakeholders to utilize their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds to enhance facilities at historically-important monuments.

Changes made: It has incorporated a host of changes to the programme such as:

- Clearly defined the amenities sought for different monuments as per Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (or AMASR Act), 1958.
- Freedom has been given to companies to either adopt a monument in whole and develop its tourism infrastructure, or provide a particular amenity such as drinking water facility or cleaning services for one or several sites.

Applying procedure for a monument: The stakeholders can apply for adopting a monument or specific amenities at a monument through a dedicated web portal

- The process for selection will be carried out after due-diligence and discussions with various stakeholders and assessing the economic and developmental opportunities at each monument.
- The term of the appointment will be for a period of five years initially, which may be further extended up to five years.

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What is an Indian Heritage app?

Indian Heritage app will showcase the heritage monuments of India. The app will feature state-wise details of monuments along with photographs, list of public amenities available, geo-tagged location and feedback mechanism for citizens.

11. 'Gujarat Declaration' underlining outcome of the first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023 released

Source: The post is based on the article **"Gujarat Declaration' underlining outcome of the first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023 released"** published in **PIB on 4th September 2023**

What is the News?

The first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit was held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

The World Health Organization (WHO) released the outcome document of the summit in form of "Gujarat Declaration".

What is the first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit?

[Click Here to read](#)

What are the key points of the Gujarat Declarations?

Gujarat declaration reaffirmed global commitments towards indigenous knowledges, biodiversity and traditional, complementary and integrative medicine.

The key action points outlined in the declaration are:

Health and Well-being: Scale up evidence-based traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine (TCIM) for universal health coverage and Sustainable Development Goals. Use science and technology to validate TCIM's contribution to health and well-being.

Global Health Leadership: Expand multi-regional collaborations through the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre and Respect Indigenous Peoples' knowledge on health.

Research and Evidence: Mobilize research funding for TCIM and strengthen research capabilities.

Universal Health Coverage and Health Systems: Integrate TCIM into national health systems and adapt laws and policies for TCIM safety and accessibility.

Digital Health and AI: Develop digital health resources, including AI, for TCIM.

Biodiversity and Sustainability: Support UN biodiversity agreements and Indigenous Peoples' involvement.

Human Rights, Equity, and Ethics: Recognize and protect Indigenous Peoples' rights and knowledge. Incorporate ethical practices in TCIM.

12. The Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalata Sampanna Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana

Source: The post is based on the article **"The Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalata Sampanna Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana"** published in **PIB on 4th September 2023**

What is the News?

A total of over 1 lakh beneficiaries have been trained under PM-DAKSH since the last three years of its implementation from 2020-21 to 2022-23.

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What is Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalata Sampanna Hitgrahi(PM-DAKSH) Yojana?

Launched in: 2020-21

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJ&E)

Type: Central Sector Scheme

Aim: To enhance competency level of the target groups to make them employable both in self-employment and wage-employment for their socio-economic development.

Target groups under this scheme are: SCs, OBCs, EBCs, DNTs, Safai Karamcharis including waste pickers etc.

Eligibility: The age criterion for the scheme is between 18-45 years.

- There is no income limit for SCs, SafaiKaramcharis including waste picker and DNT.
- The annual family income should be below Rs.3 lakh for OBCs and for EBCs (Economically Backward Classes), the annual family income should be below Rs.1 lakh.

Skilling Development under the scheme: There are four types of skill development training programmes under PM-DAKSH Yojana viz; (i) Up-skilling/Reskilling, (ii) Short Term Training Programmes, (iii) Long Term Training Programmes and (iv) Entrepreneurship Development Programme.

Benefits for Trainees: The Cost of the training to trainees is free of cost.

- The stipend under this scheme is Rs.1,500/- per month to SCs and Safai Karamcharis and Rs.1,000/- per month to OBCs/EBCs/DNTs for non-residential Short Term and Long Term training courses.
- The wage compensation of Rs.2500/- per candidate is given to SCs/OBCs/EBCs/DNTs candidates for Upskilling/Reskilling programme.
- Wage compensation Rs.500/- per candidate is given to Safai Karamcharis candidates for Upskilling programme.

13. Government proposes in SC tech panel to evaluate carrying capacity of 13 Himalayan States

Source: The post is based on the article **“Government proposes in SC tech panel to evaluate carrying capacity of 13 Himalayan States”** published in **The Hindu on 5th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Ministry of Environment and Forest and Climate Change suggested steps to assess the accurate carrying capacity of 13 Himalayan States.

What is Carrying Capacity?

The carrying capacity is the maximum population size that an ecosystem can sustain without getting degraded.

What are the suggestions given by the Central Government to assess the carrying capacity of 13 Himalayan States?

The Union government has urged the Supreme Court to issue directives to all 13 Himalayan states and Union territories for immediately assessing the carrying capacity of mountainous regions.

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These 13 Himalayan states and UTs include Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Assam and West Bengal.

States could constitute committees headed by their respective Chief Secretaries to collect information on the load-carrying capacity of their hill stations, cities and eco-sensitive zones.

The Centre will then form a 13-member technical committee headed by the Director of the GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment to evaluate the information collected by the States.

What is the National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE)?

The National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE) is one of the eight missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).

The mission is aimed at evolving management measures for sustaining and safeguarding the Himalayan glaciers and mountain ecosystem.

The measures include enhanced monitoring of the Himalayan ecosystem through establishment of the monitoring network, promoting community based management, human resource development and strengthening regional cooperation.

14. Toyota's flex-fuel prototype: How it will work, what advantages it offers

Source: The post is based on the article “**Toyota's flex-fuel prototype: How it will work, what advantages it offers**” published in **Indian Express on 5th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Road Transport Minister has launched the world's first-ever prototype of the BS-VI Stage-II Electrified Flex Fuel Vehicle. This vehicle has been developed by Toyota Kirloskar Motor.

The vehicle uses a mixture of fuel to drive the car. It includes ethanol, a biofuel produced from energy crops like sugarcane, maize and rice and an electric power.

What are Flex-Fuel vehicles?

A flexible-fuel vehicle (FFV) is an alternative fuel vehicle that has an internal combustion engine designed to run on more than one fuel.

An Electrified Flex Fuel Vehicle has both a flex fuel engine and an electric powertrain. This gives it the ability to provide dual benefit of higher ethanol use and much higher fuel efficiency.

How does Flex fuel vehicles work?

Most components in a flex fuel vehicle are the same as those in petrol-only cars. But some special ethanol-compatible components are required to adjust to the different chemical properties and energy content in ethanol/ methanol, such as modifications to the fuel pump and fuel injection system.

The Engine Control Module (ECM) is also calibrated to accommodate the higher oxygen content of ethanol.

What are the pros and cons of Flex Fuel vehicles?

Pros: The use of ethanol blending sharply lowers harmful pollutants such as carbon monoxide, sulphur, and carbon and nitrogen oxides.

– Blending will also help cut oil imports to fuel vehicles.

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Cons: Flex-fuel cars typically take a 4-8% hit on fuel efficiency when using ethanol for motive power.

– In Flex Fuel cars, ethanol is sourced from crops such as sugarcane which are usually very water-intensive.

Note: According to a NITI Aayog report, in 2019-20, more than 90% of the ethanol produced in the country came from sugarcane, which is also a politically important crop in states such as Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

– From the customer perspective, flex fuel vehicles may not seem feasible in India, since the cost of ownership and running cost are going to be very high compared with regular vehicles.

15. Union Education Minister launches 3-year partnership with Meta, Education to Entrepreneurship: Empowering a generation of students, educators and entrepreneurs

Source: The post is based on the article **“Union Education Minister launches 3-year partnership with Meta, Education to Entrepreneurship: Empowering a generation of students, educators and entrepreneurs”** published in **PIB on 4th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Minister of Education has launched ‘Education to Entrepreneurship’ partnership with Meta to empower India’s youth.

What is an “Education to Entrepreneurship” Partnership?

Education to Entrepreneurship Initiative is a collaboration between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Meta (formerly Facebook).

Aim: To bring digital skilling to the grassroots level. This will equip India’s talent pool with futuristic technologies, fostering a new generation of problem solvers and entrepreneurs.

– For instance, the partnership will help in motivating young individuals to turn their educational groundwork into flourishing enterprises.

Duration of the Partnership: 3 Years

As part of this initiative, Meta in partnership with the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) will provide digital marketing skills training to 5 lakh entrepreneurs over the next three years.

– This training will be conducted in seven regional languages, benefiting both budding and existing entrepreneurs.

– To make this training accessible to a broad audience, Meta will utilize its platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram.

16. How gene mapping almost all remaining kākāpō will help NZ’s rare night parrot survive

Source: The post is based on the article **“How gene mapping almost all remaining kākāpō will help NZ’s rare night parrot survive”** published in **Down To Earth on 3rd September 2023**

What is the News?

The genetic mapping of almost the entire kākāpō population has shed new light on specific traits that will help conservation biologists in their efforts to save the kākāpōs.

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What is Kākāpō?



Source: Wikipedia

The Kākāpō is a species of parrot found only in New Zealand.

IUCN Status: Critically Endangered

Characteristics: They are the world's only flightless parrot, the world's heaviest parrot and also are nocturnal and herbivorous.

– It is also possibly one of the world's longest-living birds, with a reported lifespan of up to 100 years.

– They only breed every few years, triggered by the availability of certain forest foods such as the fruits of the native rimu tree.

– It is also the only parrot to have a polygynous lek breeding system (It is a mating system in which the male provides no parental care to its offspring).

Significance: Kākāpō was historically important to Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand.

Population: Their population dropped as low as 51 during the 1990s. But thanks to the sustained efforts, the kākāpō population is now up to 247 birds

Threats: kākāpō suffer from diseases such as the fungal infection aspergillosis and many of their eggs are infertile.

17. Sherpa Track, Finance Track, and Engagement Groups: What are the G20 'workstreams'?

Source: The post is based on the article “**Sherpa Track, Finance Track, and Engagement Groups: What are the G20 'workstreams'?**” published in **Indian Express on 5th September 2023**

What is the News?

The 18th annual G20 Heads of State and Government Summit will take place at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.

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What is G20?

[Click Here to read](#)

What are the different tracks under G20?

The G20 works in three major tracks — two of them are official and one is unofficial.

The official tracks are the Finance Track and the Sherpa Track. The unofficial track includes engagement groups or civil society groups.

Finance Track:

The Finance Track is headed by the finance ministers and central bank governors.

It usually meets four times a year, with two meetings being held on the sidelines of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings.

It mainly focuses on fiscal and monetary policy issues such as the global economy, infrastructure, financial regulation, financial inclusion, international financial architecture, and international taxation.

Sherpa Track:

The Sherpa Track was established after the forum became a leaders' summit in 2008. It consists of representatives of heads of state.

It mainly focuses on socio-economic issues such as agriculture, anti-corruption, climate, digital economy, education, employment, energy, environment, health, tourism, trade and investment.

Each representative is known as a Sherpa — it is the metaphor from the mountaineering domain, where the Sherpa is supposed to do the heavy lifting or assist the mountaineer. There are 13 working groups within the Sherpa Track.

Engagement Groups:

The unofficial track comprises engagement or civil groups. These groups often draft recommendations to the G20 Leaders that contribute to the policy-making process.

The engagement groups are as follows: Business20, Civil20, Labour20, Parliament20, Science20, SAI20, Startup20, Think20, Urban20, Women20 and Youth20.

18. [Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the United Nations World Tourism Organization \(UNWTO\) unveiled the G20 Tourism and SDG Dashboard](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) unveiled the G20 Tourism and SDG Dashboard”** published in **PIB on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), unveiled the G20 Tourism and SDG Dashboard.

What is G20 Tourism and SDG Dashboard?

The G20 Tourism and SDG Dashboard serves as a comprehensive online public platform, amalgamating the collective knowledge of the G20 Tourism Working Group.

It showcases best practices, case studies and insights from G20 countries for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

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What is the Goa Roadmap for Tourism?

UNWTO as the knowledge partner of India's G20 Presidency has developed the Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Roadmap is built around the five priority areas of the Tourism Working Group under India's G20 Presidency: 1. Green Tourism; 2. Digitalization; 3. Skills; 4. Tourism micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and 5. Destination Management.

Tourism and the G20 economies:

The G20 economies represent around 85% of the global GDP, over 75% of the global trade and about two-thirds of the world population.

In 2022, the G20 welcomed 74% of international tourists and 73% of tourism exports worldwide. In 2019, pre COVID-19 pandemic the Tourism Direct GDP reached 3.7% of the G20 economies.

19. Centre signs MoU with Adobe to train children in classroom

Source: The post is based on the article “**Centre signs MoU with Adobe to train children in classroom**” published in **The Hindu on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Ministry of Education has partnered with Adobe, a global software company, to promote creative expression in classrooms using Adobe Express.

What is Adobe Express?

Adobe Express is an AI-first, all-in-one, quick and easy content creation app with generative AI capabilities, that allows users to create content like posters, animated videos, web pages, PDFs and more.

What is the purpose of the partnership between the Union Ministry of Education and Adobe?

Aim: To provide training and certification in creativity and digital literacy to about 20 million students and five lakh teachers by 2027 using Adobe Express-based curriculum.

Under the programme, Adobe will provide schools across the country with free access to Adobe Express Premium and professional development of educators.

– Curriculum, training and certification based on Adobe Express tools and capabilities will be rolled out to empower students and educators with topics covering creativity, generative AI, design, animation, video and other emerging technologies.

– Educators will receive Adobe Creative Educators certification upon completion of training.

Significance: The initiative will help in empowering students with the tools and resources to develop future-ready skills on creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration, and empower educators with critical skills required to inspire creative classrooms.

20. TRAI releases recommendations on “Issues related to FM Radio Broadcasting”

Source: The post is based on the article “**TRAI releases recommendations on “Issues related to FM Radio Broadcasting”**” published in **PIB on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released its recommendations on issues related to FM radio broadcasting including private FM Radio operators.

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What are the recommendations given by TRAI to address issues related to FM radio broadcasting?

Firstly, extend the existing FM license period of 15 years by 3 years.

Secondly, private FM radio operators should be allowed to broadcast news and current affairs programs, limited to 10 minutes in each clock hour.

Thirdly, annual license fee of a FM radio channel should be de-linked from non-refundable one-time entry fee and the license fee should be calculated as 4% of the Gross Revenue (GR) of the FM radio channel during the respective financial year.

Fourthly, the Government may take appropriate measures to provide relief to the FM radio operators to address challenges posed due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Fifthly, functions or features pertaining to FM radio should remain enabled and activated on all mobile handsets having the necessary hardware. Built-in FM radio receivers in mobile handset must not be subjected to any form of disablement or deactivation.

Sixthly, a Standing Committee, headed by a senior officer of Joint Secretary or above level, to oversee and monitor the compliance by mobile phone manufacturers (or importers) may be established by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

Lastly, an online grievance redressal portal should be provided for submitting information or complaints of case of any non-compliance as regards enablement of FM radio functionality in such mobile handsets that have the necessary functionality for FM receivers.

21. FM flags threats to financial system from crypto, tax havens

Source: The post is based on the article “**FM flags threats to financial system from crypto, tax havens**” published in **The Hindu on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Finance Minister has addressed the delegates at the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2023 being held in Mumbai.

What are the key highlights from the Finance Minister’s address at the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2023?



Source: The Hindu

Global Financial Threats: Cryptocurrency, drug mafias, tax havens, and cyber threats are significant global financial threats. Collaboration is needed to address these challenges effectively.

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Cryptocurrencies offer opportunities but they also pose threats. Hence, efforts are needed to regulate and address issues related to crypto assets.

Fintech Industry: Fintech industry in promoting financial inclusion and influencing India's financial landscape. Fintechs have played a substantial role in lending and reaching out to new customers.

– The Finance Minister urged fintech companies to invest heavily in cybersecurity measures, including advanced encryption, to protect user data and financial transactions. Security is crucial for building trust in the financial ecosystem.

Cross-Border Payments: India's priority, under its G20 presidency, includes enhancing cross-border payment arrangements, especially considering the volume of remittances to the country.

Unclaimed Deposits: According to RBI, balances in savings or current accounts which are not operated for ten years, or term deposits not claimed within ten years from the date of maturity are classified as unclaimed deposits.

– Banking system alone is estimated to hold over Rs 35,000 crore in unclaimed deposits.

– To facilitate the recovery of these unclaimed funds, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had recently launched [UDGAM \(Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to Access information\) central web portal](#).

22. Jal Jeevan Mission Achieves Milestone of 13 Crore Rural Households Tap Connections

Source: The post is based on the article “**Jal Jeevan Mission Achieves Milestone of 13 Crore Rural Households Tap Connections**” published in **PIB on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) has achieved another milestone of providing tap water connections to 13 Crore rural households.

What is the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)?

[Click Here to read](#)

What is the progress made under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)?

Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) has achieved the milestone of providing tap water connections to 130 million rural households.

The rural tap connection coverage has increased from 32.3 million households at the start of the mission in 2019 to 130 million in just four years.

Currently, Goa, Telangana, Haryana, Gujarat, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Puducherry, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu and Andaman and Nicobar Islands have reported 100% coverage.

Every second, one tap water connection is installed, thus changing the country's rural landscape. Since January 1, 2023 around 87,500 tap connections have been provided every day.

Tap water supply has been provided to 915,000 (88.73%) schools, and 952,000 (84.69%) anganwadi centers in the country.

The mission has also successfully resolved the issue of Arsenic and Fluoride contamination in drinking water sources providing safe drinking water in affected habitations.

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23. 'Green Hydrogen Pilots in India' Conference held in the run-up to G20 Summit

Source: The post is based on the article “**Green Hydrogen Pilots in India Conference held in the run-up to G20 Summit**” published in **PIB on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

“Green Hydrogen Pilots in India” conference was held in New Delhi.

What is the Green Hydrogen Pilots in India conference?

Hosted by: NTPC Limited

Purpose: The conference showcased various Green Hydrogen Pilots being implemented by both public and private sector companies of India.

What are the key highlights from the conference?

India’s commitment to green hydrogen sets it apart from countries using natural gas-based hydrogen with higher emissions. India aims to be an influential exporter and a leader in the green hydrogen approach.

India’s carbon dioxide contribution is relatively low compared to its population, reflecting its dedication to environmental concerns. The shift toward green hydrogen aligns with the goals of energy independence and environmental responsibility.

India intends to become a refueling destination for green ships by providing affordable green hydrogen or green ammonia. Collaboration with the Ministry of Shipping is in progress.

The National Green Hydrogen Mission’s pilot projects are the driving force behind innovation and experimentation. They target sectors traditionally reliant on fossil fuels.

The R&D roadmap for the National Green Hydrogen Mission is nearly finalized and will be released soon. It outlines research areas needed for green hydrogen development.

Public and private sectors are also implementing several pilot projects in green hydrogen, contributing to the growth of the green hydrogen ecosystem.

24. Scientists fabricated optically active flexible biodegradable polymer-nanocomposite films

Source: The post is based on the article “**Scientists fabricated optically active flexible biodegradable polymer-nanocomposite films**” published in **PIB on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

Researchers have developed a biodegradable nanocomposite film for Flexible Optical Devices.

What are Polymers?

[Click Here to read](#)

What is the importance of Polymers?

Polymers have become important in our daily lives finding applications in various industries.

However, the demand for highly flexible and optically active polymers has led researchers to explore new materials and methodologies.

The nanomaterials are known to enhance the properties of the polymers keeping the inherent properties of the polymers intact.

Scientists have reported that polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) is one of the most widely studied synthetic biodegradable polymers having good film-forming and excellent mechanical properties. Its optical and mechanical properties can be tuned by incorporating suitable nanomaterials.

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What have the researchers developed?

Researchers have developed an optically active biodegradable nanocomposite film with excellent mechanical properties.

This innovation could pave the way for the development of flexible displays and organic LEDs, revolutionizing the field of optical technology.

The biodegradable nature of the material also aligns with sustainability goals, making it a promising candidate for various future applications.

25. UPI QR Code-Central Bank Digital Currency interoperability: How does it work and how do customers benefit?

Source: The post is based on the article **“UPI QR Code-Central Bank Digital Currency interoperability: How does it work and how do customers benefit?”** published in **Indian Express on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

Several banks are enabling the interoperability of Unified Payments Interface's (UPI) Quick Response (QR) code with their [Central Bank Digital Currency \(CBDC\)](#) or e₹ application.

What is Interoperability?

Interoperability is the technical compatibility that enables a payment system to be used in conjunction with other payment systems.

It allows system providers and participants in different systems to undertake, clear and settle payment transactions across systems without participating in multiple systems.

What is QR Code?

A QR code consists of black squares arranged in a square grid on a white background, which can be read by an imaging device such as a camera. QR contains information about the item to which it is attached.

QR code is an alternate contactless channel of payments. It allows merchants or businesses to accept payments from their customers directly into their bank accounts.

What is UPI QR code-CBDC interoperability?

Interoperability of UPI with the digital rupee means all UPI QR codes are compatible with CBDC apps.

Initially, when the pilot for the retail digital rupee was launched, the e₹-R users had to scan a specific QR code to undertake transactions.

However, with the interoperability of the two, payments can now be made using a single QR code.

How will this benefit customers and merchants?

The interoperability of UPI and CBDC will ensure seamless transactions between a customer and merchant without having the need to switch between multiple digital platforms.

It will allow a digital rupee user to make payments for their daily needs, such as groceries and medicines, by scanning any UPI QR codes at any merchant outlet.

Even merchants are not required to keep a separate QR code to accept the digital rupee payments. They can accept CBDC payments on their existing QR code.

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How will interoperability help in increasing CBDC adoption?

Currently, UPI is a widely used payment method and the interoperability between it and the CBDC will propel the adoption of the digital rupee.

26. New Covid-19 variant may be ‘reason to worry’: What is known about ‘Pirola’ so far

Source: The post is based on the article “**New Covid-19 variant may be ‘reason to worry’: What is known about ‘Pirola’ so far**” published in **Indian Express on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

An article published in the Yale Medicine Review has noted the rise of Covid-19 infections in multiple countries driven by a new Coronavirus variant called BA.2.86 which is informally being termed ‘Pirola’.

What is Pirola?

Pirola is a newly designated highly mutating Omicron variant of Covid-19 virus.

It was first spotted in Denmark and has now spread to other countries like the US, Canada and Israel.

Pirola differs from previous variants of Omicron as it has more than 30 spike protein mutations. This gives it the capacity to be immune, evasive and highly transmissible.

It is currently in the WHO list of ‘variants under monitoring’.

How do viruses mutate, exactly?

It is natural for all viruses to mutate over time and such changes are particularly common in viruses that have RNA as their genetic material as in the case of coronaviruses and influenza viruses.

Once a virus enters the human body, its genetic material — RNA or DNA — enters the cells and starts making copies of itself which can infect the other cells. Whenever an error occurs during this copying process, it triggers a mutation.

Occasionally, a mutation comes along when the genetic mistakes that are introduced while copying prove to be advantageous for the virus — these help the virus copy itself or enter human cells more easily.

Whenever a virus is widely circulating in a population, the more it spreads and replicates, its chances of mutating increases.

27. Biodiversity loss: 37,000 ‘alien species’ introduced by human activities, says report

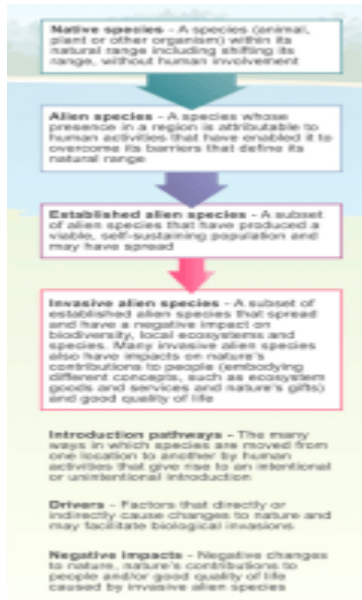
Source: The post is based on the article “**Biodiversity loss: 37,000 ‘alien species’ introduced by human activities, says report**” published in **Indian Express on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has released a publication titled “Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control”.

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What are Invasive Alien species?



Source: IPBES

Invasive alien species are plants, animals, pathogens and other organisms that are non-native to an ecosystem, and which may cause economic or environmental harm or adversely affect human health.

In particular, they impact adversely upon biodiversity, including decline or elimination of native species – through competition, predation, or transmission of pathogens – and the disruption of local ecosystems and ecosystem functions.

What are the key findings of IPBES report on Invasive Alien species?

Number of Introduced Alien Species: There are 37,000 alien species introduced by human activities worldwide.

– Over 3,500 of these alien species pose significant global threats to nature, economy, food security, and human health.

Most widespread invasive alien species: The water hyacinth is the world's most widespread invasive alien species on land.

– Lantana, a flowering shrub and the black rat are the second and third most widespread globally. The brown rat and the house mouse are also widespread invasive alien species.

Not all alien invasive species have negative impacts: Not all alien species establish and spread with negative impacts on biodiversity, local ecosystems and species but a significant proportion do.

– About 6% of alien plants; 22% of alien invertebrates; 14% of alien vertebrates; and 11% of alien microbes known to be invasive pose major risks to nature and to people.

– Nearly 80% of the documented impacts of invasive species on nature's contribution to people are negative.

What is the impact of Invasive Alien species?

Impact on Biodiversity: Invasive alien species are a major driver of biodiversity loss, contributing to 60% of global plant and animal extinctions.

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– They are one of the five major direct drivers of biodiversity loss globally alongside land and sea-use change, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, and pollution.

Economic Impact: The annual costs of invasive alien species have at least quadrupled every decade since 1970, as global trade and human travel increased. In 2019, the global economic cost of invasive alien species exceeded \$423 billion annually.

Impact on Food Supply: The reduction of food supply is the most common impact of alien invasive species. For example, the European shore crab impacting commercial shellfish beds in New England or the Caribbean false mussel damaging locally important fishery resources in Kerala, by wiping out native clams and oysters.

Spreads Diseases: Invasive alien species like *Aedes albopictus* and *Aedes aegyptii* spread diseases such as malaria, Zika and West Nile Fever.

Amplify impact of Climate Change: Invasive alien species can also amplify the impacts of climate change. For example, invasive alien plants, especially trees and grasses, can sometimes be highly flammable and promote more intense fires.

What has been the response of countries against Invasive Alien species?

Most countries (80%) have included targets related to managing invasive alien species in their national biodiversity plans.

However, only 17% specifically address the issue in national legislation. Nearly half of all countries (45%) do not invest in management of biological invasions.

Recently, countries have agreed to reduce the rate of introduction and establishment of invasive alien species by at least 50% by 2030 under **Target 6 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**.

28. Cabinet approves the Scheme titled Viability Gap Funding for development of Battery Energy Storage Systems(BESS)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Cabinet approves the Scheme titled Viability Gap Funding for development of Battery Energy Storage Systems(BESS)**” published in **PIB on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Cabinet approves the Scheme for Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

What are Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)?

Battery storage or battery energy storage systems (BESS) are devices that enable energy from renewables, like solar and wind, to be stored and then released when the power is needed most.

India needs to develop BESS for making round-the-clock renewable energy supply possible.

What is Viability Gap Funding(VGF)?

Viability Gap Finance means a grant to support projects that are economically justified but not financially viable.

Viability Gap Funding is provided as a grant one-time or deferred with the objective of making a project commercially viable.

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What is the Scheme for Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)?

Aim: To harness the potential of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power with the aim to provide clean, reliable, and affordable electricity to the citizens.

Target: The scheme envisages development of 4,000 MWh of BESS projects by 2030-31.

Financial support: Up to 40% of the capital cost will be supported in the form of Viability Gap Funding (VGF). The entire viability gap funding (VGF) will be borne by the Central Government.

– The VGF shall be disbursed in 5 tranches linked with the various stages of implementation of BESS projects.

– To ensure that the benefits of the scheme reach the consumers, a minimum of 85% of the BESS project capacity will be made available to Distribution Companies (Discoms).

Significance: The scheme is in sync with India's ambition to meet its 50% of energy requirements through renewable energy and non-fossil energy sources by 2030 and also help reduce carbon emission.

– **Note:** Solar energy has increased from 2.6 GW in 2014 to 71 GW at present while wind energy has increased from 21 GW (in 2014) to 40 GW.

India is meeting its 25% of energy demand from renewable energy, including from large hydro plants.

29. "TDB-DST supports M/s Eco Recycling Limited's Innovative "Recycling on Wheels Smart ER" to address India's E-waste Challenge

Source: The post is based on the article "TDB-DST supports M/s Eco Recycling Limited's Innovative "Recycling on Wheels Smart ER" to address India's E-waste Challenge" published in **PIB on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

Technology Development Board (TDB) is supporting M/s Eco Recycling Limited with ₹6 crores for their innovative e-waste management project called '**Recycling on Wheels Smart ER**' which has a total cost of ₹12 crores.

What is the "Recycling on Wheels Smart ER" Project?

Launched by: M/s Eco Recycling Limited.

Purpose: It is an innovative e-waste management project that focuses on improving e-waste management.

The project's workflow includes: 1) Pre-processing e-waste on a mobile facility 2) Scanning and serializing e-waste devices 3) Shredding the devices 4) Collecting shredded e-waste in secure bins and 5) Environmentally friendly disposal of the shredded e-waste.

Features of the project: The project serves Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and R&D centers filling a crucial gap in e-waste management in India.

– The project also offers skill development for informal sector workers and aligns with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) principles.

– In its second phase, the project aims to extract precious metals from the shredded waste, contributing to a circular economy.

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Significance: The e-waste problem in India is a major concern with only 20% of the 3.2 million tonnes generated in 2019-20 being formally recycled.

– The project addresses this e-waste crisis in India while promoting environmental sustainability and improving livelihoods.

30. Indian Air Force and Drone Federation of India to co-host Bharat Drone Shakti 2023

Source: The post is based on the article “**Indian Air Force and Drone Federation of India to co-host Bharat Drone Shakti 2023**” published in **PIB on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

Indian Air Force (IAF) is teaming up with the Drone Federation of India to co-host ‘Bharat Drone Shakti 2023’.

What is Bharat Drone Shakti 2023?

Organized by: Indian Air Force (IAF) with the help of Drone Federation of India

Aim: To present the full potential of the Indian drone industry with an impressive lineup of over 50 live aerial demonstrations.

– These demonstrations will encompass a diverse range of drone applications, including survey drones, agriculture drones, fire suppression drones, tactical surveillance drones, drone swarms and counter-drone solutions.

Significance: Bharat Drone Shakti 2023 will give a fillip to India’s commitment to becoming a global drone hub by 2030.

What is the Meher Baba Swarm Drone competition?

Launched in: 2018 by Indian Air Force(IAF)

Aim: To encourage the development of swarm drones for the utilization of varied domains, including response to disaster relief operations.

– **Note:** Swarm drones consist of a number of drones controlled from the same station which can be programmed using an algorithm to carry out various tasks, including surveillance.

31. Engagement with ASEAN is an important pillar of India’s ‘Act East’ policy, says PM

Source: The post is based on the article “**Engagement with ASEAN is an important pillar of India’s ‘Act East’ policy, says PM** ” published in **The Hindu on 7th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Prime Minister has reached Indonesia to attend the 20th ASEAN-India summit and 18th East Asia Summit(EAS).

What is the ASEAN-India summit?

The ASEAN-India summit was started in 2002 in Cambodia.

The summit meetings hold high significance as they offer opportunities for leaders of participating countries to meet and gain from dialogue and interactions.

Since 2002, India has not missed a single ASEAN-India summit.

This year’s summit is India Prime Minister’s 9th Summit and the first one after the relations were elevated to the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) level.

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What is the East Asia Summit(EAS)?

The East Asia Summit (EAS) is the Indo-Pacific's premier forum for strategic dialogue.

It is the only leader-led forum at which all key Indo-Pacific partners meet to discuss political, security and economic challenges facing the region and has an important role to play in advancing closer regional cooperation.

The summit comprises eighteen participating countries including ten ASEAN Member States (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

The first East Asia Summit (EAS) was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2005.

In 2023, the Chair of the East Asia Summit is the Republic of Indonesia who is also the current ASEAN Chair.

32. Conference on Transnational Grid Interconnections for One Sun, One World, One Grid held in New Delhi

Source: The post is based on the article “**Conference on Transnational Grid Interconnections for One Sun, One World, One Grid held in New Delhi**” published in **PIB on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

The conference on “Transnational Grid Interconnections for One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG)” was held in New Delhi.

The conference was organized by Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a ‘Maharatna’ company under the Ministry of Power.

What is One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG) Initiative?

Origin: The idea for the One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) initiative was put forth by the Prime Minister of India at the First Assembly of the ISA in 2018.

Launched in: It was jointly launched by the Prime Minister of India and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during the ‘Accelerating Innovation and Clean Technology Deployment’ event at the World Leaders Summit held on 2 November 2021 during COP26.

Vision: The vision behind the OSOWOG initiative is the mantra that “the sun never sets”.

Aim: To aid in developing a worldwide grid through which clean energy can be transmitted anywhere, anytime (use power at night in one part of the world from solar energy generated on the other side of the world where it is day time).

How will the OSOWOG Initiative be implemented?

OSOWOG is divided into three main phases:

In the first phase, the Indian grid would be connected to the grids of Middle East, South Asia and South-East Asia to develop a common grid. This grid would then be used to share solar energy as per need, in addition to other renewable energy sources.

The second phase would connect the functional first phase to the pool of renewable resources in Africa.

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The third phase would look at achieving true global interconnection. The idea will be to integrate as many countries as possible to create a single power grid of renewable energy. This can then be accessed by all countries.

How will the OSOWOG Initiative help the world become more sustainable?

All participants in the initiative will focus on attracting effective investments in renewable energy sources by utilizing technology, finance and skill. When all stakeholders coordinate, it is expected to bring down project cost, lead to higher efficiencies and increased asset utilization for all involved.

The initiative may also have a spillover effect as the cost effective source of energy production could be used in other areas such as poverty alleviation, provision of drinking water, sanitation facilities and food security.

33. Union Minister launches the Malaviya Mission – Teachers Training Programme by University Grants Commission

Source: The post is based on the article “**Union Minister launches the Malaviya Mission – Teachers Training Programme by University Grants Commission**” published in **PIB on 6th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Minister for Education has launched the Malaviya Mission.

What is the Malaviya Mission?

Malaviya Mission is a Teachers Training Programme by the University Grants Commission.

Aim: To provide tailored training programmes for teachers and to improve the capacity building of faculty members in higher educational institutions.

– To improve the quality of teachers’ training, build leadership skills in teachers and help realize the goals of National Education Policy (NEP).

Features: The mission will ensure continuous professional development and help in building capacities of 15 lakh teachers of HEIs through 111 Malaviya Mission centers (formerly known as Human Resource Development Centers (HRDCs))

– The capacity building under the Mission will be mapped to the credit framework to ensure career progression pathways for educators.

Themes: The themes identified for course curriculum for Capacity building of Faculty Members in HEIs include: Multidisciplinary Education, Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), Academic Leadership, Research and Development, Skill Development, Student Diversity among others.

– The three main themes that were discussed during India’s G20 Presidency: deployment of technology in the use of education, achieving sustainable development goals and women-led development are also to be incorporated in the Teachers Training Programmes.

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34. Free dementia support line and online memory clinic launched in India

Source: The post is based on the article “**Free dementia support line and online memory clinic launched in India**” published in **The Hindu on 7th September 2023**

What is the News?

Dementia India Alliance (DIA), a non-profit, family carer-centered organization has launched a National Dementia Support Line and DemClinic.

What is DemClinic?

DemClinic will be the first national comprehensive expert-led cognitive assessment platform for the elderly.

The initiative is aimed at supporting families and persons with dementia through post-diagnostic care and support.

What is ‘The Blue Button Movement’?

It will be organized by Dementia India Alliance (DIA) on September 21 to mark World Alzheimer’s Day.

The blue button is a symbol of awareness and support for people affected by dementia.

This campaign will include the formation of a human chain symbolically resembling the blue button like a shield or a coat of arms, unifying and encouraging people to recognize the impact of dementia, empathize and take proactive steps to support patients.

What is Dementia?

Dementia is a term for several diseases that affect memory, thinking, and the ability to perform daily activities.

Dementia is caused by many different diseases or injuries that directly and indirectly damage the brain. Alzheimer disease is the most common form and may contribute to 60–70% of cases.

Currently more than 55 million people have dementia worldwide, over 60% of whom live in low- and middle-income countries. Every year, there are nearly 10 million new cases.

Dementia is currently the seventh leading cause of death and one of the major causes of disability and dependency among older people globally.

35. Explained | The global push to make ecocide a crime

Source: The post is based on the article “**Explained | The global push to make ecocide a crime**” published in **The Hindu on 7th September 2023**

What is the News?

Mexico is considering passing a law to make ecocide a crime.

What is Ecocide?

Ecocide is derived from Greek and Latin. It translates to ‘killing one’s home’ or ‘environment’.

Such ‘killing’ could include port expansion projects that destroy fragile marine life and local livelihoods; deforestation; illegal sand mining; polluting rivers with untreated sewage.

Legal Definition of ecocide: There is no accepted legal definition of ecocide, but a Stop Ecocide Foundation in 2021 prepared a definition of ecocide.

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– It has defined Ecocide as the unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts.

Commonly cited examples of ecocide include: deforestation during the Vietnam War, the destruction of the environment during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, deforestation in Indonesia and the Amazon rainforest, oil pollution in the Niger Delta and the Chernobyl disaster.

The term ‘ecocide’ was popularized by Olof Palme when he accused the United States of ecocide at the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment.

Is ecocide covered under International Law?

At present, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) deals with four atrocities: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

– The provision on war crimes is the only statute that can hold a perpetrator responsible for environmental damage albeit if it is intentionally caused and **during wartime situations.**

Why should ecocide be criminalized?

Over a third of the earth’s animal and plant species could be extinct by 2050. Unprecedented heat waves have broken records worldwide. Changing rainfall schemes have disrupted flood and drought patterns.

Deforestation of the Amazon, deep-sea trawling or even the catastrophic 1984 Bhopal gas disaster could have been avoided with ecocide laws in place.

Ecocide laws could also double up as calls for justice for low- and middle-income countries disproportionately affected by climate change.

Which countries have criminalized ecocide?

Ecocide is a crime in 11 countries, with 27 other nations mulling laws around criminalizing environmental damage that is wilfully caused and harms humans, animals and plant species.

The European Parliament voted unanimously this year to enshrine ecocide in law.

What has been India’s stance on ecocide?

Some Indian judgments have used the term ‘ecocide’ in passing, but the **concept hasn’t fully materialized in law.**

– **In Chandra CFS and Terminal Operators Pvt. Ltd. v. The Commissioner of Customs and Ors (2015)**, the Madras High Court noted: the prohibitory activities of ecocide have been continuing unbridledly by certain sections of people by removing the valuable and precious timbers.

– **In an ongoing case, T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad vs Union of India & Ors**, the Supreme Court called attention to an “anthropogenic bias” and argued that “environmental justice could be achieved only if we drift away from the principle of anthropocentric to ecocentric”.

Hence, there is a need for India to align the existing environmental legislations with the concept of ecocide.

One more critical challenge is to tackle problems of liability and compensation. For instance, the survivors of Bhopal gas tragedy are still fighting for compensation.

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36. Global Biofuels Alliance may be a key G20 takeaway under India's presidency

Source: The post is based on the article “**Global Biofuels Alliance may be a key G20 takeaway under India's presidency**” published in **TOI on 8th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Prime Minister may launch the Global Biofuels Alliance during the upcoming G20 summit.

What is the Global Biofuels Alliance?

Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA) is backed by the US, Brazil and India which are the leading biofuel producers and consumers.

Aim: To facilitate cooperation and intensifying the use of sustainable biofuels, including in the transportation sector.

– It will place emphasis on strengthening markets, facilitating global biofuels trade, development of concrete policy lesson-sharing and provision of technical support for national biofuels programs worldwide.

Membership: The alliance will have a three-category membership structure bringing together member countries, partner organizations and industries.

What are Biofuels?

Biofuels are derived from a variety of biomass and considered a low-carbon, affordable and sustainable source of energy.

According to estimates from the International Energy Agency (IEA), global biofuel production would need to triple by 2030 to put the world's energy systems on track toward net zero emissions by 2050.

The Government of India is pushing biofuels such as ethanol blending of petrol and Compressed biogas (CBG) to reduce the economy's carbon footprint, dependence on imported oil and raise income of farmers.

India achieved 10% ethanol blending of petrol in June last year and has a target of 25% blending by 2025.

Under the 2018 SATAT Scheme, 5,000 CBG plants are to be built for an estimated annual production of 15 million tonnes of gas by next year. India currently has a total ethanol production capacity of 947 crore liters.

37. Indian Railways' Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) Vadodara and Airbus sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for aerospace teaching and research

Source: The post is based on the article “**Indian Railways' Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) Vadodara and Airbus sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for aerospace teaching and research**” published in **PIB on 8th September 2023**

What is the News?

Indian Railways Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) Vadodara and Airbus have entered into collaboration to significantly strengthen the Indian aviation sector.

The partnership will enable co-development and co-delivery of sector-relevant skilling courses and programs for regular students and working professionals, joint research and industry experiences for faculty, internships and placements for students and scholarship programs.

It is expected that 15000 students are likely to be placed in Airbus India operations.

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What is Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya(GSV)?

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya(GSV) is a Central University established through an Act of Parliament in 2022.

It subsumes the previously-existing National Rail and Transportation Institute (NRTI).

Mandate: To create best in class manpower and talent for the entire transportation and logistics sectors.

Sponsored by: Ministry of Railways, Govt. of India.

Chancellor: Union Minister of Railways.

Located in: Vadodara, Gujarat.

Significance: GSV is a “first of its kind” university aiming to fulfill the mandate of the National Developmental Plans (PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan 2021 and National Logistics Policy 2022) across railways, shipping, ports, highways , roads, waterways and aviation etc.

What is Airbus?

Airbus is the world’s largest manufacturer of commercial aircraft and a leading producer of helicopters, defence and space equipment.

Airbus and Tata had recently announced a partnership to design, innovate, make, manufacture and develop in India C295 aircraft facility at Vadodara (Gujarat).

38. Without sperm or egg, how scientists grew whole model of human embryo

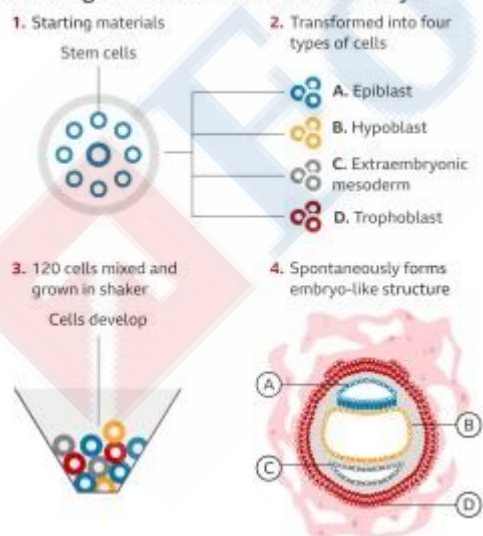
Source: The post is based on the article “**Without sperm or egg, how scientists grew whole model of human embryo**” published in **Indian Express on 8th September 2023**

What is the News?

Scientists have successfully grown a “human embryo” in the lab without using an egg or sperm.

How did scientists grow a human embryo in the lab without using an egg or sperm?

Creating a model of the human embryo



Source: Nature/Weizmann Institute



Source: BBC

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Instead of a sperm and egg, the starting material was stem cells which were reprogrammed to gain the potential to become any type of tissue in the body.

Chemicals were then used to coax these stem cells into becoming four types of cell found in the earliest stages of the human embryo: 1) epiblast cells, which become the embryo proper (or foetus) 2) trophoblast cells, which become the placenta 3) hypoblast cells, which become the supportive yolk sac and 4) extraembryonic mesoderm cells.

A total of 120 of these stem cells were mixed in a precise ratio – and then, the scientists step back and watch.

About 1% of the mixture began the journey of spontaneously assembling themselves into a structure that resembles a human embryo.

The embryo models were allowed to grow and develop until they were comparable to an embryo 14 days after fertilization. In many countries, this is the legal cut-off for normal embryo research.

Why are embryo models and research important?

There is no way for scientists to ethically research the early stages of development of an embryo, as it is difficult to study it after it implants in the uterus. Scientists currently study these initial changes in various lab models or donated embryos.

This research is crucial because the initial days of embryo development is when the majority of miscarriages and birth defects occur. Studying these initial stages may help scientists understand genetic and inherited diseases better.

Moreover, the understanding of why some embryos develop normally, retain the proper genetic code and implant properly in the womb while others do not may also help in improving success rates of in vitro fertilization.

Can lab-grown embryos be used to get pregnant?

No. These models are meant to just study the early stages of development of a foetus.

It is generally accepted — and legally supported in most countries — that these embryo models will be destroyed after studying the first 14 days. Attempts to implant are not allowed.

Why is there a 14-day limit on embryo research?

The limit was first proposed by a committee in the UK in 1979 after the birth of the first test tube baby Louise Brown demonstrated that embryos could be kept alive in laboratories.

The 14-day period is equivalent to when embryos naturally finish implantation. It is also when cells start becoming an “individual”, and breaking off into a twin is not possible.

39. Explained | What is a heat index and why is it important to measure?

Source: The post is based on the article “**Explained | What is a heat index and why is it important to measure?**” published in **The Hindu on 8th September 2023**

What is the News?

Recently, Iran recorded a scorching heat index of 70 degrees Celsius (°C) in the coastal part of the country, a metric at which survival of life is difficult.

What is the heat index?

Heat index, also known as apparent temperature, is a measure of how the temperature feels to humans.

Relative humidity is an important factor that determines heat index along with air temperature.

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How is the Heat Index calculated?

The calculation of the heat index involves a complex formula developed by Dr. Robert Steadman in 1979. Dr. Steadman's formula considers a typical adult human of certain height and weight and incorporates the dew point. Dew Point is the temperature at which air cannot hold any more water vapour, and droplets of water begin to form. In his calculations, Dr. Steadman used 14 °C as the dew point in his calculations.

Some countries, like Canada, have their own indices to measure the heat index.

In 2024, India is scheduled to launch its own heat index to quantify the impact of heat on its population and generate impact-based heatwave alerts for specific locations.

Why is it important to measure the Heat Index?

Impact on Health: High humidity combined with high temperatures can lead to heat stress and heat-related illnesses. It's crucial to know when conditions are ripe for these health risks so that people can take precautions.

Safety: Heat index values help determine the level of caution needed during hot weather. It provides guidance on when it's safe to engage in physical activity outdoors and when it's potentially dangerous, preventing heat-related illnesses and even fatalities.

Climate Change: As temperatures rise due to climate change, we can expect more extreme heat conditions. Monitoring the heat index allows us to prepare, adapt, and implement strategies like early warnings, adjusted work schedules, and sustainable cooling solutions to cope with these extremes.

40. India showcases PM Gatishakti National Master Plan at Asian Development Bank's 2023 Regional Cooperation and Integration Conference

Source: The post is based on the article "**India showcases PM Gatishakti National Master Plan at Asian Development Bank's 2023 Regional Cooperation and Integration Conference** " published in **PIB on 7th September 2023**

What is the News?

India showcased PM Gatishakti National Master Plan at the '2023 Regional Cooperation and Integration Conference: Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration through Economic Corridor Development (ECD)'.

The conference was organized by Asian Development Bank (ADB) at Tbilisi, Georgia.

What is PM Gati Shakti?

Launched in: October 2021

Aims: **1)** Establish synergies among different ministries during the planning stage itself **2)** Align timelines of various projects through efficient planning **3)** Promote standardization of the designs for efficient project approval and **4)** Enable standardized procedures by all the agencies to reduce project delays.

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What is PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan?



Source: PIB

PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan was developed by Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics(BISAG).

It is a technology backed infrastructure development platform with GIS based data layers of infrastructure, geographic features and demography, and various decision support systems.

The platform enables integrated planning, synchronized implementation, and project monitoring.

The platform aims at enhancing industrial productivity and helping the country achieve its green logistics and clean energy goals by enormously boosting the multi-modal connectivity across highways, railways, ports, airports, logistics infrastructure, mass urban transportation and inland waterways.

The NMP also has customized decision making and planning tools for functionalities of adding project/data; measure proximity; identification of Go/No Go Area; obtaining NOC from different departments, etc.

41. Prime Minister's participation in the 20th ASEAN-India Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit

Source: The post is based on the article **"Prime Minister's participation in the 20th ASEAN-India Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit"** published in **PIB on 8th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Prime Minister attended the 20th ASEAN-India Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Jakarta, Indonesia.

What is the ASEAN-India Summit and East Asia Summit?

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What are the key highlights from the PM's address at the 20th ASEAN-India Summit?

The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific region and highlighted the alignment between India's Indo-Pacific Ocean's Initiative (IPOI) and ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

He presented a 12-point proposal to enhance cooperation between India and ASEAN covering various areas. The 12 point proposal includes:

- 1) Establishing a multi-modal connectivity and economic corridor linking South-East Asia, India, West Asia, and Europe.
- 2) Offering to share India's Digital Public Infrastructure Stack with ASEAN partners.
- 3) Announced the ASEAN-India fund for Digital Future, focusing on digital transformation and financial connectivity.
- 4) Renewing support for the Economic and Research Institute of ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) as a knowledge partner.
- 5) Advocating for common issues faced by Global South countries in multilateral forums.
- 6) Inviting ASEAN countries to join the Global Centre for Traditional Medicine being established by WHO in India.
- 7) Offering to share India's experience in providing affordable and quality medicines through Jan-Aushadhi Kendras.
- 8) Emphasizing the collective fight against terrorism, terror financing and cyber-disinformation.
- 9) Inviting ASEAN countries to join the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.
- 10) Promoting cooperation in disaster management.
- 11) Enhancing cooperation on maritime safety, security, and domain awareness.
- 12) Collaborating on Mission LiFE.

42. A blanket ban on crypto hard to implement: Report

Source: The post is based on the article **"A blanket ban on crypto hard to implement: Report"** published in **Livemint on 8th September 2023**

What is the News?

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Financial Stability Board (FSB) have released advanced policy and regulatory recommendations to identify and respond to macroeconomic and financial stability risks associated with crypto assets.

What are the risks presented by crypto-assets?

The report noted that crypto-assets pose risks to macroeconomic and financial stability as well as risks involving financial integrity, consumer and investor protection and market integrity.

In some instances, these risks are exacerbated by noncompliance with existing laws.

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Can we completely ban crypto assets?



Source: Business Standard

Blanket bans that make all crypto-asset activities — trading and mining — illegal can be costly and technically demanding to enforce.

This is because blanket bans tend to increase the incentives for circumvention due to the inherent borderless nature of crypto-assets, resulting in potentially heightened financial integrity risks and creating inefficiencies.

Moreover, ban in one jurisdiction could also lead to activity migrating to other jurisdictions, creating spillover risks.

Hence, **instead of banning crypto assets we can take other measures such as:**

- Comprehensive policy and regulatory response for crypto-assets to address the risks of crypto-assets to macroeconomic and financial stability.
- Targeted restrictions such as crypto taxation to address risks.
- Monitor crypto's impact on the International Monetary System.
- To curb misuse of these assets, countries should implement the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing standards that apply to virtual assets and virtual asset service providers.

43. Centre seeks public comments on Draft Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns

Source: The post is based on the article “**Centre seeks public comments on Draft Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns**” published in **PIB on 8th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India has sought public comments on Draft Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns.

What are the Draft Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns?

Definition of Dark Patterns: Dark Patterns are deceptive design patterns using user interface or user experience interactions on any platform.

- These practices are designed to mislead or trick users to do something they originally did not intend or want to do.
- Dark patterns undermine consumer autonomy, decision-making and choice potentially constituting misleading advertising, unfair trade practices or violations of consumer rights.

Different Types of Dark Patterns:

False Urgency: It means falsely stating or implying the sense of urgency or scarcity so as to mislead a user into making an immediate purchase or take an immediate action, which may lead to a purchase.

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Basket sneaking: It means inclusion of additional items such as products, services, payments to charity/donation at the time of checkout from a platform, without the consent of the user, such that the total amount payable by the user is more than the amount payable for the product(s) and/or service(s) chosen by the user.

Confirm shaming: It means using a phrase, video, audio or any other means to create a sense of fear or shame or ridicule or guilt in the mind of the user, so as to nudge the user to act in a certain way that results in the user purchasing a product or service from the platform or continuing a subscription of a service.

Forced action: It shall mean forcing a user into taking an action that would require the user to buy any additional good(s) or subscribe or sign up for an unrelated service, in order to buy or subscribe to the product/service originally intended by the user.

Subscription trap: It means the process of making cancellation of a paid subscription impossible or a complex and lengthy process including similar other practices.

Interface interference: It means a design element that manipulates the user interface in ways that (a) highlights certain specific information; and (b) obscures other relevant information relative to the other information; to misdirect a user from taking an action desired by her.

Bait and switch: It means the practice of advertising a particular outcome based on the user's action but deceptively serving an alternate outcome.

Drip pricing: It means a practice whereby-elements of prices are not revealed upfront or are revealed surreptitiously within the user experience; and/or other such practice.

Disguised advertisement: It means a practice of posing, masking advertisements as other types of content such as user generated content or new articles or false advertisements.

Nagging: It shall mean a dark pattern due to which users face an overload of requests, information, options, or interruptions; unrelated to the intended purchase of goods or services, which disrupts the intended transaction.

What are the challenges in enforcing these guidelines according to experts?

The real challenge lies in conclusively proving that certain practices indeed qualify as dark patterns.

Consider the 'false category,' for instance. How will a regulator determine if a hotel or platform claiming, 'only 2 rooms remaining – book now!' is genuinely providing accurate data, or misleading users due to a lack of context?.

44. G20 document prepared by World Bank lauds India's progress

Source: The post is based on the article **"G20 document prepared by World Bank lauds India's progress"** published in **PIB on 9th September 2023**

What is the News?

The G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion document prepared by the World Bank has lauded the transformative impact of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in India over the past decade under the Central Government.

What is Digital Public Infrastructure(DPI)?

[Click Here to read](#)

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What did the World Bank document say about India's Digital Public Infrastructure(DPI)?

World Bank document discusses the significant achievements and impact of India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in various areas:

Financial Inclusion: India's DPI particularly the JAM (short for Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) Trinity, has greatly improved financial inclusion, increasing the adult inclusion rate from 25% to over 80% in just six years. This progress would have taken decades without DPI.

Government to Person (G2P) Payments: India's digital G2P system, built on DPI, has facilitated the transfer of \$361 billion directly to beneficiaries through various government schemes, resulting in significant savings.

UPI (Unified Payments Interface): UPI transactions in May 2023 alone exceeded 9.41 billion. For the fiscal year 2022-23, the total value of UPI transactions was nearly 50 percent of India's nominal GDP.

DPI Benefits for the Private Sector: DPI has increased efficiency for private organizations by reducing complexity, costs, and processing times. This has had positive effects on sectors such as SME lending, depreciation costs and fraud detection.

Lower KYC Compliance Costs: The India Stack has digitized and simplified KYC procedures, reducing banks' compliance costs from \$0.12 to \$0.06 and making it more profitable to serve lower-income clients.

Cross-Border Payments: The UPI-PayNow interlinking between India and Singapore, operationalized in February 2023, promotes faster, cheaper, and more transparent cross-border payments.

Account Aggregator (AA) Framework: India's AA Framework, regulated by RBI, enables individuals and enterprises to share data securely and with consent. There are 1.13 billion cumulative accounts enabled for data sharing.

Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA): DEPA empowers individuals to control their data and share it across providers, fostering innovation and competition without heavy investments in client relationships.

45. RBI decides to discontinue I-CRR in a phased manner

Source: The post is based on the article "RBI decides to discontinue I-CRR in a phased manner" published in **The Hindu on 9th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that it would **discontinue the incremental cash reserve ratio (I-CRR)** in a phased manner.

What is the Incremental cash reserve ratio (I-CRR)?

I-CRR is an additional cash balance which the RBI can ask banks to maintain over and above the Cash Reserve Ratio(CRR).

Note: Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) is the minimum amount of the total deposits which banks have to maintain as cash reserves with the Reserve Bank of India. It is an essential tool to maintain the health of the banking system. Banks cannot use this amount for lending or for any investment purposes.

Why was Incremental cash reserve ratio (I-CRR) introduced?

The I-CRR was introduced on August 10, 2023 by RBI.

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I-CRR was announced as a temporary measure to absorb excess liquidity from the banking system.

The level of surplus liquidity in the system surged because of the return of Rs 2,000 banknotes to the banking system.

RBI's surplus transfer to the government also led to increase in government spending and capital inflows.

Note: Last time, RBI imposed the I-CRR was in November 2016 to absorb a part of the surplus liquidity in the system following the demonetization of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 banknotes on November 8, 2016. It was later discontinued from the fortnight beginning December 10, 2016.

46. Tribes India Pavilion at crafts bazaar at Bharat Mandapam Showcases wide range of tribal Art for G20 Leaders' Summit

Source: The post is based on the article "Tribes India Pavilion at crafts bazaar at Bharat Mandapam Showcases wide range of tribal Art for G20 Leaders' Summit" published in PIB on 9th September 2023

What is the News?

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd (TRIFED), Ministry of Tribal Affairs is showcasing a wide range of traditional tribal art, artifacts, paintings and many more at the 'Tribes India' pavilion.

The exhibition is being hosted at the Crafts Bazaar as part of the G-20 Leaders' Summit at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

What are the tribal arts showcased at the Tribes India pavilion?

Pithora Art: It is a ritualistic painting characterized by animated figures and lavish use of color.

– These paintings are done by the Rathwa, Bhilala, Naik and Bhil tribes of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

– The paintings speak of the social, cultural and mythological life and beliefs of the tribals. The paintings are a medium of propitiation, thanksgiving and commemoration of

auspicious occasions.

– Padma Shri awardee Shri Paresh Rathwa is a renowned artist of Pithora art.

What are the other tribal arts displayed at the Tribes India pavilion?

Gond painting from Madhya Pradesh.

Saura painting by artisans from Odisha.

Angora and Pashmina shawls from the high altitudes of Leh-Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.

The colorful jewellery by the **Konyak tribes of Nagaland** appeases the eye.

Maheshwari silk sarees from Madhya Pradesh: It is worn during religious functions and auspicious events.

Dhokra jewellery: It is carved out of molten metals, beads, colorful glass pieces, and wooden balls. Tribal artisans from West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh are the architects of these pieces of intrinsic art.

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47. Thali economics: How food inflation is pinching vegetarian households more, why September promises some respite

Source: The post is based on the article “Thali economics: How food inflation is pinching vegetarian households more, why September promises some respite” published in **Indian Express on 9th September 2023**

What is the News?

According to a rating firm Crisil, the increase in food prices is affecting both vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals, with a significant 24.26% rise in vegetarian thali meal costs and a 12.54% increase in non-vegetarian thali meal costs.

What is a thali meal and how are its costs calculated?



Source: Indian Express

Thali is an Indian-style meal made up of a selection of various dishes – vegetarian and non-vegetarian – which are served on a platter.

A veg thali comprises roti, vegetables (onion, tomato, and potato), rice, dal, curd, and salad. For non-veg thali, the constituents remain the same but for dal, which is replaced by chicken.

According to Crisil, the average cost of preparing a thali at home is calculated based on input prices prevailing in north, south, east and west India.

The monthly change reflects the impact on the common man's expenditure. The data also reveals the ingredients (cereals, pulses, broilers, vegetables, spices, edible oil, cooking gas) driving changes in the cost of a thali.

What led to the rise in prices of Thali meals?

The rise in thali prices was primarily driven by the significant **increase in the price of tomatoes**.

– For instance, of the 24.26% increase in the cost of a vegetarian thali, 21% can be attributed solely to the 176% rise in tomato prices over the past year, going from Rs 37/kg to Rs 102/kg.

– Additionally, the prices of onions increased by 8%, chillies by 20%, and cumin by 158% from August 2022, contributing to a one percent increase in the cost of a vegetarian thali.

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In the case of non-vegetarian thali, the cost increase was less pronounced because the price of broilers, which make up over 50% of the cost, rose only moderately by 1-3% during the year.

Will the Thali prices come down in the coming months

Thali prices are expected to decrease as the retail price of tomatoes has dropped to Rs 51/kg from July 2023.

Additionally, the cost of a LPG cylinder has been reduced. This is good news for consumers and should provide some relief.

48. Joint Statement from India and the United States

Source: The post is based on the article “**Joint Statement from India and the United States**” published in **PIB on 8th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Prime Minister of India and US President held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of G20.

What are the key takeaways from the India and US President bilateral meeting?

Quad: Both countries reassured the significance of the Quad in supporting a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific region. They looked forward to the next Quad Leaders’ Summit, to be hosted by India in 2024.

UN Reform and Security Council: US President reaffirmed his support for a reformed UN Security Council with India as a permanent member. India’s candidature for the UNSC non-permanent seat in 2028-29 was also welcomed by the US.

Technology Cooperation: Both leaders acknowledged the role of technology in their partnership and commended the India-US **Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)**.

Space: ISRO and NASA have started discussions for a joint effort to the International Space Station in 2024.

– India and the United States also intend to increase coordination on planetary defense to protect planet Earth and space assets from the impact of asteroids and near-Earth objects.

Semiconductor Supply Chains: They recognized the importance of resilient semiconductor supply chains and welcomed investments from U.S. companies in India.

Telecommunications and Digital Inclusion: An MoU was signed between Bharat 6G Alliance and Next G Alliance to deepen cooperation in telecommunications. They also discussed digital inclusion.

Defence Collaboration: The leaders pledged to enhance cooperation in defence, including space and AI. Negotiations for manufacturing GE F-414 jet engines in India are underway.

– The leaders also commended the **India-U.S. Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X)** team for establishing a robust collaboration agenda to harness the innovative work of the U.S. and Indian defense sectors to address shared security challenges.

Quantum Technology: The United States reiterated its commitment to working together with India in the quantum domain both bilaterally and through the **Quantum Entanglement Exchange** (a platform to facilitate international quantum exchange opportunities).

India-U.S. Global Challenges Institute: The two leaders welcomed the signing of an MoU between Indian universities represented by the Council of Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT Council) and the Association of American Universities (AAU) to establish the India-U.S. Global Challenges Institute.

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– This institute will bring together leading research and higher-education institutions from across our two nations, including beyond AAU and IIT membership, to advance new frontiers in science and technology.

WTO disputes: The leaders lauded the settlement of the seventh and last outstanding World Trade Organisation (WTO) dispute between India and the United States. This follows the unprecedented settlement of six outstanding bilateral trade disputes in the WTO in June 2023.

Innovation Handshake: The two leaders welcomed the development of an ambitious “Innovation Handshake” agenda within the India-US Commercial Dialogue.

– This initiative will encompass two anchor events—one in India and the other in the United States—where startups, private equity and venture capital firms, corporate investment departments, and government officials from both countries will collaborate to strengthen connections within their respective innovation ecosystems.

49. 21st VARUNA Naval Exercise between India and France begins

Source: The post is based on the article “21st VARUNA Naval Exercise between India and France begins” published in **PIB on 8th September 2023**

What is the News?

The 21st edition of Exercise Varuna (Varuna-23) between the Indian and French Navy was conducted in the Arabian Sea.

What is Exercise Varuna?

Type: Bilateral Naval Exercise

Countries Involved: India and France.

Started in: 1993. The exercise was named ‘VARUNA’ in 2001.

Aim: To provide an opportunity to learn from each other’s best practices and procedures and to facilitate operational level interaction between the two Navies.

What are the other exercises between India and France?

Exercise Garuda: It is a bilateral exercise between the Indian and French Air Force. The first edition of the exercise was held in 2003.

Exercise SHAKTI: It is a biennial military exercise conducted between India and France. It was first conducted in the year 2011.

Exercise La Pérouse: It is a multilateral maritime exercise led by the French Navy. The Indian Navy participated in this exercise for the first time in 2021.

50. Trai’s latest recommendations likely to help FM radio find lost signal

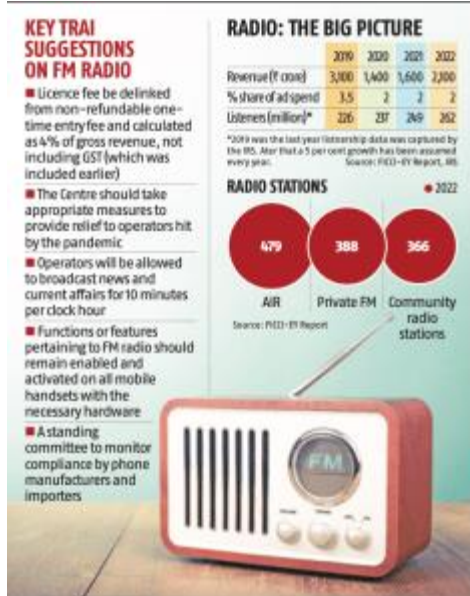
Source: The post is based on the article “Trai’s latest recommendations likely to help FM radio find lost signal” published in **Business Standard on 9th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released its recommendations on issues related to FM radio broadcasting including private FM Radio operators.

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What are the recommendations given by TRAI to address issues related to FM radio broadcasting?



Source: Business Standard

[Click Here to read](#)

What are the expected benefits of TRAI recommendations on FM Radio?

Firstly, the FM Radio industry will be able to increase its revenue

Secondly, FM radio can become a great tool to bridge the information gap that exists in rural India.

– Many in rural India still rely on FM radio channels for their entertainment and information.

Thus, allowing private FM players to broadcast news can prove to be a game changer for the government and other companies in delivering news to their citizens or customers in all parts of the country.

Thirdly, this will help them to bring more programming variety to radio.

51. Centre notifies third phase of mandatory hallmarking from September 8, 2023

Source: The post is based on the article “Centre notifies third phase of mandatory hallmarking from September 8, 2023” published in **PIB on 9th September 2023**

What is the News?

The third phase of the mandatory hallmarking vide Hallmarking of Gold Jewellery and Gold Artefacts (Third Amendment) Order, 2023 comes into force from September 8, 2023.

The third phase will cover an additional 55 new districts under the mandatory hallmarking system.

What is Hallmarking?

Hallmarking is the accurate determination and official recording of the proportionate content of precious metal in precious metal articles.

Hallmarks are thus official marks used in many countries as a guarantee of purity or fineness of precious metal articles.

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The principle objectives of the Hallmarking Scheme are to protect the public against adulteration and to obligate manufacturers to maintain legal standards of fineness.

In India, at present two precious metals namely gold and silver have been brought under the purview of Hallmarking.

What is the Hallmarking scheme?

Under the Hallmarking scheme of Bureau of Indian Standards(BIS), Jewellers are registered for selling hallmarked jewellery and recognised testing and hallmarking centers.

Aim: To protect consumers against victimization due to irregular gold or silver quality, develop India as a leading gold market center in the World and develop export competitiveness.

Mandatory Hallmarking of Gold Jewellery:

Mandatory Hallmarking of Gold Jewellery has come into force from June,2021.

In the first phase, mandatory hallmarking was implemented in 256 districts of the country with effect from 23 June 2021 and in the second phase additional 32 districts were covered.

52. Why the RBI has proposed setting-up a Self Regulatory Organisation for fintechs

Source: The post is based on the article “Why the RBI has proposed setting-up a Self Regulatory Organisation for fintechs” published in **Indian Express on 8th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Reserve Bank of India(RBI) Governor has called upon fintech entities to establish Self-Regulatory Organizations (SROs).

What are Self-Regulatory Organizations (SROs)?



Source: Economic Times

SRO is a non-governmental organization that sets and enforces rules and standards relating to the conduct of entities in the industry (members) with the aim of protecting the customer and promoting ethics, equality and professionalism.

SROs typically collaborate with all stakeholders in framing rules and regulations.

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Their self-regulatory processes are administered through impartial mechanisms such that members operate in a disciplined environment and accept penal actions by the SRO.

Regulations by SRO supplement but do not replace applicable laws or regulations.

What is the need for an SRO?

Firstly, SROs could play a pivotal role in the fintech industry by promoting responsible practices and maintaining ethical standards.

– There have been many instances where a few fintech players were involved in unethical practices such as charging exorbitant higher interest rates and harassment of borrowers for recovering loans.

Secondly, by proactively addressing issues like market integrity, conduct, data privacy, cybersecurity, and risk management, SROs can help build trust among consumers, investors and regulators.

What are the functions of SRO?

Communication: Acting as a link between members and regulatory bodies like the RBI.

Standards: Setting industry benchmarks and promoting professional behavior.

Training: Providing training and awareness programs for members.

Dispute Resolution: Establishing a uniform grievance resolution framework.

What are the advantages of SRO?

Expertise: SROs are experts in their industries, providing valuable knowledge and insights to their members.

Ethical Standards: They enforce ethical standards among their members, fostering trust in the industry.

Oversight: SROs act as watchdogs, preventing unprofessional practices.

53. 'Bharat: Mother of Democracy' portal launched at G20 exhibition

Source: The post is based on the article “**Bharat: Mother of Democracy' portal launched at G20 exhibition**” published in **New Indian Express on 9th September 2023**

What is the News?

On the eve of the G20 leadership summit, the Ministry of Culture has launched a 'Bharat: The Mother of Democracy' Portal.

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What is 'Bharat: The Mother of Democracy' Portal?



Source: PIB

Bharat: The Mother of Democracy portal offers content that delves into India's democratic legacy spanning an astonishing 7,000 years.

Sections: The portal is divided into five sections and 22 sub-sections starting from Sindhu-Saraswati Civilisation (6000- 2000 BCE), Mahajanapada and Gantantra (7-8 BCE), Vijaynagar Empire (14-16 century) and Mughal emperor Akbar reign (1556-1605) to Constitution of India (1947) and Elections in Modern India (1952 onwards).

Languages: The content on the portal is available in 16 languages including German, French, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese, Italian, Turkish, and Russian besides English and Hindi.

Content developed by: The content for the portal has been curated by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), which is a center for research, academic pursuit and dissemination in the field of the arts under the Ministry of Culture.

54. [India-Middle East-Europe mega economic corridor: What is the project and why is it being proposed?](#)

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

55. G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration

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

What is the News?

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

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What is the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration?

THE NEW DELHI DECLARATION

ON UKRAINE WAR



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

ON CLIMATE CHANGE



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

ON GRAIN/FOOD/ENERGY SECURITY



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

ON ECONOMIES & FINANCIAL MARKETS



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

ON GLOBAL DEBT VULNERABILITIES



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

ON HEALTH



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

Source: Indian Express

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is an Interim Medical Countermeasure Platform?

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

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

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

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

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

What is the role proposed for traditional medicine?

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is the Goa Roadmap for Tourism?

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

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

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

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

What is the 'Tourism for Tomorrow' Initiative?

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

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

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What is the Travel for LiFE initiative?

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS),2023?

[Click Here to read](#)

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

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

Section 69: It creates two violations:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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What is the Global Biofuel Alliance?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Significance of the alliance for India:

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

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

62. Apple country gets ground ready for cannabis cultivation

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

What is the News?

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

What is Hemp?

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

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

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What does the NDPS act say on Cannabis Cultivation?

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

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

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

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

What is the Himachal Pradesh Government planning on Cannabis?

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

Setup in: 2019

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

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

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

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

What happened during the talks between India and Saudi Arabia?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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How is the Presidential Election conducted in Maldives?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

66. Rice sowing area surpasses 400 lakh hectares marks

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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What is the significance of this data on Kharif Crops?

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Click Here to read](#)

69. CBI does not require permission to probe pre-2014 cases too: SC

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

[What is the News?](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What have scientists developed to detect and kill cancer cells?

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

These hybrid nanoparticles have unique properties:

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

What is the African Union(AU)?

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

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

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

Secretariat: Addis Ababa.

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

What are the objectives of the AU?

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

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

What are the notable achievements of the AU?

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

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

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

What have been the shortcomings of the AU?

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

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

73. President of India to virtually launch Ayushman Bhav Campaign

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

What is the News?

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

What is the Ayushman Bhav campaign?

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is the Eastern Maritime Corridor?



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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



Source: Deloitte

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What are the strengths of BRSR Framework?

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

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

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

What are the weaknesses of BRSR Framework?

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

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

What are the improvements needed to the BRSR Framework?

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

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

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

76. Maritime information sharing workshop 2023

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

Theme: “Advancing Maritime Security for a Sustainable Future”

Participating countries: 31 countries are participating in the workshop.

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

What is the Djibouti Code of Conduct(DCOC)?

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why have carmakers started to move away from diesel?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is Nipah Virus?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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79. Salem sago gets GI tag

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

What is the News?

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

What is Salem sago?



Source: The Hindu

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

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

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

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

What is Tapioca?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)?

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

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

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

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

When was VVPAT first introduced?

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

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

What percentage of VVPAT slips are counted as of now?

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

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

What is the present petition demanding?

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

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

What did the EC say about this?

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

Where is Derna?

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

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

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

- This extreme weather was caused by Storm Daniel, also known as Cyclone Daniel, originating in Greece. As it moved across the Mediterranean Sea, it transitioned into a “medicane,” gaining strength from abnormally warm sea surface temperatures.
- Higher temperatures, likely a consequence of global warming, intensified the storm, resulting in more powerful winds and heavier rainfall.

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

- The city's location at the end of a valley and bisected by the Wadi Derna, a seasonal river typically protected by dams, made it susceptible to flooding.
- Cyclone Daniel's impact caused the collapse of dams outside the city, leading to flash floods down Wadi Derna that inundated the city.

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

- Political turmoil shifted focus away from maintaining and developing critical infrastructure, including dams, desalination plants, electrical grids, and roads. Neglect of infrastructure throughout the country left it in disrepair.
- Libya's lack of flood-resilient structures, roads, and early-warning systems further exacerbated the catastrophe as flooding is rare in the region.

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is One Health approach?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion(GPFI)?

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

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

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

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

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

84. For sickle cell patients, an elusive disability certificate

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

What is the News?

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

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

What is Sickle-cell disease(SCD)?

[Click Here to read](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is a C-295 MW aircraft?

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

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

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

Key Features:

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

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

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

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

India-Airbus deal for C295 aircraft:

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

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

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

86. Cabinet approves eCourts Phase III for 4 years

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

What is the News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the eCourts Project Phase III.

What is eCourts Project?

[Click Here to read](#)

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

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

What is the aim of eCourts Project Phase III?

Type: Central Sector Scheme

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

Duration: Four Years (2023 onwards)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What are the expected benefits of eCourts Project Phase III?

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

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

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

Enhanced accuracy and transparency in court proceedings

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is the Konark Wheel?



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

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

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

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

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

What is Konark Sun Temple?

[Click Here to read](#)

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Major recommendations:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How does the NJDG Portal help?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

What is the National Logistics Policy?

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

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

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

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

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

Unified Logistics Interface Platform(ULIP)

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

Logistics Performance Index 2023

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

OIML is an intergovernmental organisation created in 1955.

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

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

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

Headquarters: Paris, France

Why is the OIML certificate important?

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

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

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

92. 4th G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group Meeting concludes in Varanasi with finalization of the G20 Sustainable Finance Report, 2023

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key Provisions of the Act:

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

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

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

[Click Here to read more](#)

94. 55th Network Planning Group Meeting under PM GatiShakti recommends six infrastructure projects

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

Where is Nyoma?



Source: Swarajya

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

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

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

Significance of construction of the Nyoma airfield:

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is arXiv?

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

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

How does arXiv's approval system work?

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

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

What are the benefits of arXiv?

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

Why is ArXiv bad for research?

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is the issue between India and Canada?

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

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

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

What is the status of India-Canada trade ties?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

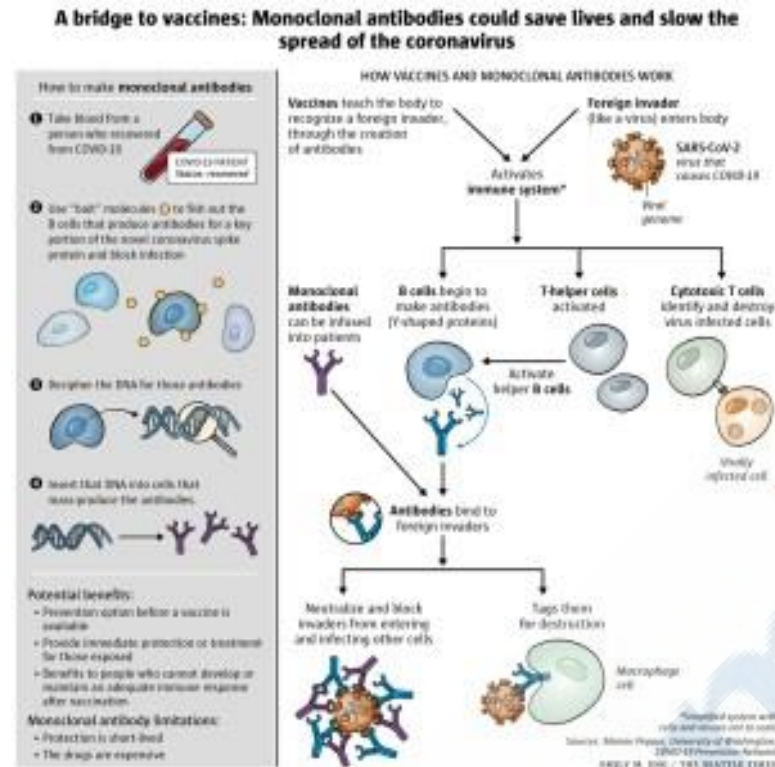
Source: The post is based on the article **“India seeks Australia’s help in battle against Nipah virus”** published in **The Hindu on 16th September 2023**

What is the News?

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

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What are Monoclonal Antibodies?



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is PM Vishwakarma?

Type: Central Sector Scheme

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is UPAg Portal?

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

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

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

Developed by: Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

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

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

What are the key issues addressed by UPag Portal?

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is the Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) campaign?

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

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

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

Theme for 2023: Garbage Free India.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

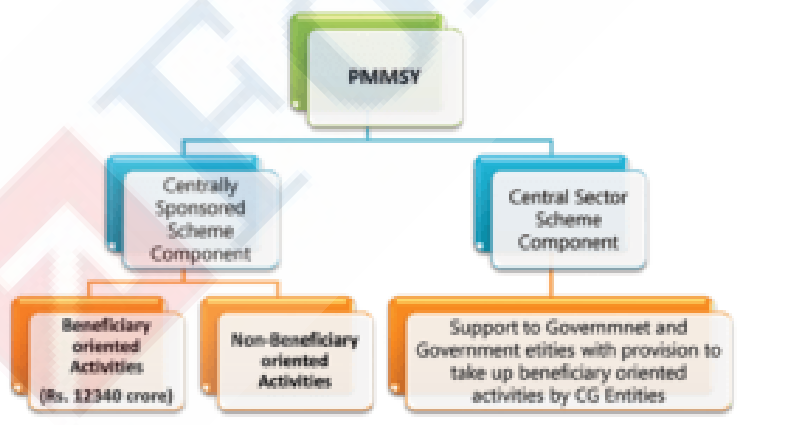
102. Department of Fisheries organizes event on 3rd Anniversary of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana in Indore

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

What is the News?

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

What is Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojna(PMMSY)?



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

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

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

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

[Click here to read more](#)

What is Matsya Sampada Jagrukta Abhiyan?

Organized by: Department of Fisheries.

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

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

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

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

103. [India's goods trade deficit hits a 10-month high](#)

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

What is the News?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

104. Gati Shakti to help speedup auction of critical minerals

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

What is the News?

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

What is PM Gati Shakti?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the News?

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

What is Skill India Digital (SID) Platform?

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

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

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

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

Key Features of the platform:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

106. 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.

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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 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.

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](#)

107. 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'.

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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.

108. 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.

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.

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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.

109. 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, 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.

110. 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**

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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.

111. 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.

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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.

112. 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.

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.

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113. 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 **Indian 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 Hoysaleswara 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.

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.

Hoysaleswara temple in Halebidu:



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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 1121 CE during the reign of the Hoysala King, Vishnuvardhana Hoysaleswara.

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).

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.

114. [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).

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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.

115. 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.

116. 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

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

117. [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.

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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.

118. 600 self-neutralizing 'Vibhav' anti-tank mines with safety mechanism inducted into Army

Source: The post is 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.

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.

119. 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.

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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.

120. 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

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– **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.

121. 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.

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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.

122. [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.

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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.

123. 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”.

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.

124. 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.

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What are Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas?

Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas comprises three temples in Karnataka namely the Channakeshava temple in Belur, the Hoysaleswara 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.

[Click Here to read more](#)

125. 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.

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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.

126. 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.

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](#)

127. 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:

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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.

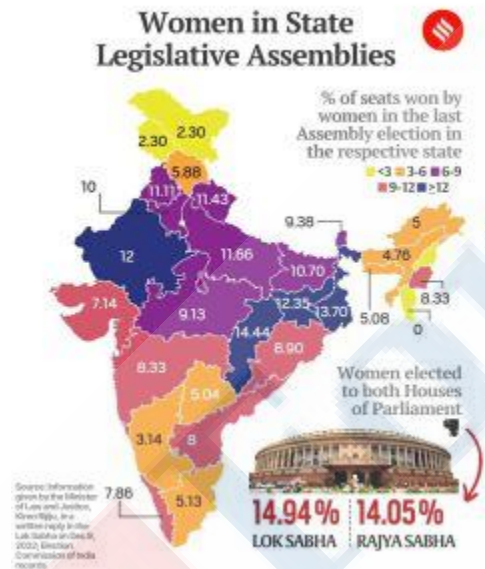
128. PM hails passage of The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023 in the Lok Sabha

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.

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.

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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.

– 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.

129. 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.

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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.

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.

130. 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.

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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.

131. 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)

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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.

132. 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:

- **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.

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133. 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.

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.

134. 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.

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

135. 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.

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.

136. 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.

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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.

137. 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.

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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 CO2 footprints and most energy efficient in the world.

138. 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.

139. 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.

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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, 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)** to 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.

140. [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.

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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)** present 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 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.

141. 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 dry 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

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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.

142. 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.

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.

143. 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.

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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.

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

144. 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.

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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.

145. 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

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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.

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

146. 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.

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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 AUSTRALIA 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.

147. 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.

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148. 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 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.

149. 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.

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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.

150. [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.

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 Kerala’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.

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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'.

151. Galactic tides: Pushing and pulling the heavens

Source: The post is based on the article “Galactic tides: Pushing and pulling the heavens” published in **The Hindu on 26th September 2023**

What is the News?

This article talks about the Galactic Tides.

What are Galactic Tides?

Galactic tides are a gravitational phenomenon that occurs within galaxies, including our Milky Way.

They are similar to Earth's ocean tides but on a much larger scale.

They are caused by gravitational forces within a galaxy arising in the interactions between celestial objects like stars and gas clouds.

How does Galactic Tides influence various aspects of a galaxy's evolution?

Firstly, they can reshape a galaxy structure by creating tidal tails and bridges, promoting star formation, and disrupting smaller star systems.

Secondly, they can disrupt the orbits of stars, leading to gradual and long-term changes in a galaxy's structure.

Thirdly, galactic tides also have a say in the ways in which proximate galaxies do and don't interact.

– Researchers have observed the closest galaxy to the Milky Way, the colossal Andromeda, and found that tidal streams near its edges could be signatures of dwarf galaxies that were later devoured.

– The Andromeda galaxy is heading towards the Milky Way and will collide in four billion years.

Fourthly, they also affect the supermassive black holes at galaxy centers, leading to events that change the ways in which these cosmic beasts interact with nearby stars.

152. First ever drone exhibition cum display 'Bharat Drone Shakti 2023' inaugurated by Raksha Mantri at Hindan Air Force Station

Source: The post is based on the article “First ever drone exhibition cum display 'Bharat Drone Shakti 2023' inaugurated by Raksha Mantri at Hindan Air Force Station” published in **PIB on 26th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Defence Minister has inaugurated the Bharat Drone Shakti-2023 exhibition at the Hindan Air Base in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.

The minister also formally inducted the first C-295 MW transport aircraft into the Indian Air Force (IAF).

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What is Bharat Drone Shakti?

Bharat Drone Shakti is a collaborative effort between the Indian Air Force and the Drone Federation of India (DFI).

Aim: To present the full potential of the Indian drone industry with an impressive lineup of over 50 live aerial demonstrations.

– These demonstrations will encompass a diverse range of drone applications, including survey drones, agriculture drones, fire suppression drones, tactical surveillance drones, drone swarms and counter-drone solutions.

What are the key highlights from Bharat Drone Shakti-2023?

A compact drone system designed for easy transport on motorbikes was exhibited at the drone show.

These motorbikes are equipped to carry unassembled drones, providing an efficient means of deploying technology across rural terrains.

What is a C-295 MW Aircraft?

[Click Here to read](#)

153. Indian Standards on Biofuel to Aid GBA's Clean Energy Goals

Source: The post is based on the article “Indian Standards on Biofuel to Aid GBA's Clean Energy Goals” published in **PIB on 26th September 2023**

What is the News?

India's national standards body, The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has released standards on Biofuels.

What is the purpose behind BIS releasing standards for different products?

BIS operates a Product Certification scheme for ensuring compliance to Indian Standards.

Presence of BIS standard mark (popularly known as ISI mark) on a product indicates conformity to the relevant Indian Standard.

Before granting license to any manufacturer, BIS ascertains the availability of required infrastructure and capability of the manufacturer to produce and test the product conforming to the relevant Indian Standard on a continuous basis.

The BIS certification scheme is voluntary in nature. However for a number of products, compliance to Indian Standards made mandatory by the Central Government under various statutes in public interest.

What are the standards released by BIS on biofuels?

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has released nine standards on biofuels to aid stakeholders including manufacturers, traders, and other entities dealing with biofuel or related matters.

These standards related to use as blending components in motor gasoline, automotive fuels, aviation turbine fuel and Positive Ignition Engine Powered Vehicles – Specification.

These new standards for Biofuel are in line with the objectives of Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA).

Note: BIS has also been working on a green diesel standard. The green diesel is derived from 2G feedstock including agro-residues like rice & wheat straw, cane trash, corn cobs & stover, cotton stalk, bagasse, Empty Fruit bunches, etc.

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What are the steps taken by the government to promote use of ethanol?

The global ethanol market was valued at \$99 billion USD in 2022, with an expected annual growth rate of 5% by 2032, presenting opportunities for Indian industries, job creation, and economic development.

Currently, India heavily relies on fossil fuels for transportation, resulting in substantial petroleum imports. Ethanol blending can lead to significant cost savings.

Indian Oil Manufacturing Companies (OMCs) are expanding ethanol production, and Indian vehicle manufacturers are developing ethanol-compatible engines.

The government has introduced an interest subvention scheme to promote ethanol production using molasses and grain-based distilleries.

Flex fuel vehicles, capable of using up to 85% ethanol are expected to enter the Indian market, following examples from the USA and Brazil.

154. **Following India, U.S. raises concerns over Chinese vessel's visit with Sri Lanka government**

Source: The post is based on the article “**Following India, U.S. raises concerns over Chinese vessel's visit with Sri Lanka government**” published in **The Hindu on 26th September 2023**

What is the News?

India and the U.S. have raised concerns with the Sri Lankan administration over the scheduled visit of a Chinese research vessel to Sri Lanka.

What has happened?

The Chinese research vessel, Shi Yan 6, is part of a geophysical scientific research expedition organized by the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology (SCSIO) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

It will operate in the eastern Indian Ocean for 80 days, conducting 28 scientific research projects spanning more than 12,000 nautical miles. It is scheduled to visit Sri Lanka.

This planned visit follows a series of notable events involving Chinese vessels in Sri Lanka.

In 2022, a Chinese warship docked at Colombo port, causing tensions between India and Sri Lanka.

In August 2022, Chinese military ship Yuan Wang 5 arrived at Hambantota port, despite strong reservations expressed by India and the U.S.

What has been the response of the US and China on this?

The U.S. raised its apprehensions about the upcoming visit of the Chinese research vessel.

India had also previously conveyed its concerns about the Chinese research vessel to Sri Lankan authorities. This underscores a growing international interest in the situation.

What is the response of Sri Lanka on this?

Sri Lanka has said that it would adhere to a “Standard Operating Procedure” that the government has recently finalized for all foreign vessels intending to call at a Sri Lankan port.

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155. **Union Minister flags-off 1st Green Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus from Kartavya Path, New Delhi**

Source: The post is based on the article “**Union Minister flags-off 1st Green Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus from Kartavya Path, New Delhi**” published in **PIB on 26th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Minister has flagged off the 1st Green Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus from Kartavya Path, New Delhi.

What is India's first Green Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus?

Developed by: Indian Oil Corporation(IOC)

Working: The fuel cell utilizes Hydrogen and air to generate electricity to power the bus and the only by-product from the bus is water therefore making it possibly the most environmentally friendly mode of transportation as compared to conventional buses that run on diesel and petrol.

– The buses have also been equipped with four cylinders that have a capacity of 30 kg and can run the buses for 350 km. Re-fuelling time has also been cut down and it will now take 0-12 minutes for the four tanks to fill

Deployment: Initially, 15 fuel cell buses will be deployed on specified routes in the Delhi NCR Region to establish the performance data under Indian operating conditions.

– These 15 buses shall cover a cumulative 3 lakh kilometers to establish the efficacy, efficiency and sustainability of the complete value chain.

Significance: Green Hydrogen has the capacity to replace fossil fuel-derived feedstocks in industries like petroleum refining, fertilizer production, and steel manufacturing.

– Fuel cell technology powered by green hydrogen is emerging as a significant component of the e-mobility landscape.

What is Green Hydrogen?

[Click Here to read](#)

156. **Rules amended, NGOs under FCRA will have to declare movable, immovable**

Source: The post is based on the article “**Rules amended, NGOs under FCRA will have to declare movable, immovable**” published in **TOI on 26th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has modified rules pertaining to filing of annual returns by non-government organizations(NGOS) registered under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

What is the FCRA?

The FCRA regulates foreign donations and ensures that such contributions do not adversely affect internal security.

It was enacted during the Emergency in 1976 amid apprehensions that foreign powers were interfering in India's affairs by pumping money into the country through independent organizations.

The law mandates that all NGOs register themselves under the FCRA and its registration is initially valid for five years and it can be renewed subsequently if they comply with all norms.

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As per the FCRA, every person or NGO seeking foreign donations has to be registered under the Act and has to open a bank account in State Bank of India, Delhi.

Moreover, they can utilize the funds received from abroad only for the purpose they stated during registration.

What are the new rules introduced now?

NGOs and associations registered under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) will now be required to annually declare details of movable and immovable assets created by them out of the foreign contributions received.

What were the changes made to the FCRA in the past?

In 2020, the Centre had amended the FCRA. It had stated that foreign contributions received by an organization cannot be transferred to any other person or organization unless that person or organization is also registered to accept foreign contributions.

The new rules had also reduced the use of foreign funds to meet administrative costs by NGOs to 20 percent from the existing 50 per cent.

In 2022, the Centre made more amendments, allowing Indians to receive up to Rs 10 lakh in a year from relatives staying abroad without informing the authorities. The earlier limit was Rs 1 lakh. If the amount exceeds, the individuals will now have 90 days to inform the government instead of 30 days earlier.

157. Unified Registration Portal for GOBARdhan introduced by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation to streamline the registration of Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) and biogas plants nationwide

Source: The post is based on the article “Unified Registration Portal for GOBARdhan introduced by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation to streamline the registration of Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) and biogas plants nationwide” published in **PIB on 26th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation has introduced a Unified Registration Portal for GOBARdhan to streamline the registration of Compressed Bio-Gas and biogas plants nationwide.

What is the GOBARdhan Initiative?

Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan) is an umbrella initiative of Government of India based on the whole of Government approach.

It covers the entire gamut of schemes/programmes/policies promoting the conversion of organic waste like cattle dung/ agri-residue etc to biogas/ CBG/ Bio CNG.

Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti is the coordinating department for GOBARdhan.

What is the Unified Registration Portal for GOBARdhan?

Anyone who operates or intends to set up a biogas/ CBG/ Bio CNG plant in India can obtain a registration number by registering in this unified registration portal.

The registration number is required to avail benefits/ support from other Ministries/ Departments.

Factly Compilation for the Month of September 2023

What has been announced in the Budget 2023-24 under GOBARdhan?

As per Budget Announcement 2023-24, 500 new 'waste to wealth' plants under GOBARdhan scheme will be established for promoting the circular economy.

These will include 200 compressed biogas (CBG) plants, including 75 plants in urban areas, and 300 community or cluster-based plants.

These plants will be established primarily by the private sector with support from stakeholder Ministries/Departments.

158. **Eight institutes give an array of reasons for Joshimath sinking**

Source: The post is based on the article **"Eight institutes give an array of reasons for Joshimath sinking"** published in **The Hindu on 26th September 2023**

What is the News?

The Uttarakhand government has made public reports on the land subsidence crisis in the sinking hill town of Joshimath.

What happened at Joshimath?

[Click Here to read](#)

What are the reasons for the sinking of Joshimath according to different institutes?

Central Building Research Institute Roorkee: Many buildings in Joshimath did not meet India's building code standards, and the town was situated on geologically unstable terrain.

It recommended developing a disaster-resilient model town to rehabilitate people displaced from Joshimath.

Central Ground Water Board: It said that Joshimath's location on loose sediment embedded with large boulders overlying metamorphic rocks was a significant factor contributing to the crisis.

It recommended an immediate halt to construction activities in the spring zone area and clearing any concrete material covering the emergence point of springs.

IIT Roorkee: It pointed out that the main reason for the subsidence appears to be internal erosion caused by the subsurface drainage, which may be due to infiltration of rainwater, melting of ice, waste water discharge from households and hotels.

National Institute of Hydrology: It suggested that the subsidence might have been caused by a blockage of sub-surface channels, leading to an eruption when the hydrostatic pressure of stored water exceeded the soil-water bearing capacity of the area.

It recommended prioritizing the safe disposal of water coming from the upper reaches and waste from the town.

Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology: It mentioned earthquakes as a contributing factor to gradual land subsidence.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO): It suggested various reasons including slope instability due to drainage water, loose soil and flash floods.

Geological Survey of India (GSI): It reported that areas with dense populations and multistory buildings experienced a higher density of ground cracks.

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– The report explained that the excessive load from densely constructed towering structures on the colluvium debris mass, saturated with shallow subsurface water, contributed to increased subsidence in these areas.

159. **Bihana Didi' wins Borlaug Award for introducing drought-tolerant rice in Odisha**

Source: The post is based on the article **“Bihana Didi' wins Borlaug Award for introducing drought-tolerant rice in Odisha”** published in **“Hindu Businessline”** on **26th September 2023**.

What is the News?

Indian agriculture scientist Swati Nayak has become the third Indian agriculture scientist to win the prestigious Norman E Borlaug Award for 2023.

The other two include Aditi Mukherjee (2012) and Mahalingam Govindaraj (2022).

What is the Norman E Borlaug Award?

Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Award is presented every year by the World Food Prize Foundation. It is presented in memory of the Nobel awardee Dr. Norman Borlaug,

This award recognizes exceptional, science-based achievement in international agriculture and food production by an individual under the age of 40.

Why was Swati Nayak given Norman E Borlaug Award?

Swati Nayak is credited with the successful dissemination and adoption of more than 20 climate-resilient and bio-fortified rice varieties.

Among these are **'Sahbhagi Dhan'**, a drought-tolerant variety suitable for hilly uplands, and **'BINA Dhan-11'**, which is flood-tolerant.

160. **Greater one-horned rhinos thriving in India Nepal despite poaching threat Report**

Source: The post is based on the article **“Greater one-horned rhinos thriving in India Nepal despite poaching threat Report”** published in **“The Week”** on **26th September 2023**.

What is the News?

The State of the Rhino Report, 2023 has been released by US-based International Rhino Foundation (IRF).

The report comes ahead of World Rhino Day, an annual global celebration of the five rhino species and their conservation on September 22.

What are the key findings of State of the Rhino Report, 2023?



Source: International Rhino Foundation (IRF)

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Threats: Habitat loss, poaching and climate change continue to threaten the existence of all five rhino species.

– Rhino populations that were once considered less threatened have seemingly become the primary target of poaching efforts which are orchestrated by highly organized, transnational criminal syndicates.

Impact of Climate Change: In Africa, climate change-induced drought is causing myriad detrimental impacts.

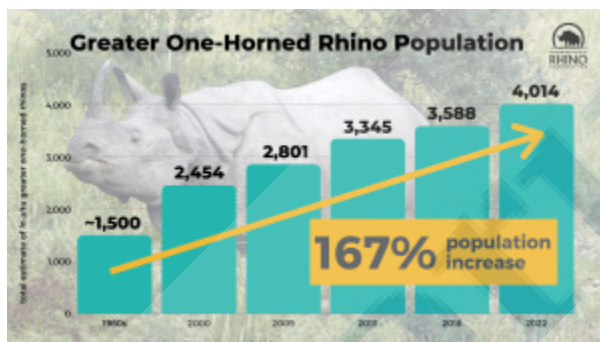
– In Asia dramatically increased precipitation and longer monsoon periods could cause more direct deaths of rhinos and humans alike.

– Changing weather conditions and landscapes can also trigger an increase in invasive plant species, crowding out or overtaking native rhino food plants and causing general habitat degradation.

Greater One Horned Rhino: Greater one-horned rhinos (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) reside primarily in India and Nepal, though there is a population that occasionally crosses into Bhutan.

– Bhutan, India and Nepal work together to implement a trans-boundary management strategy for the greater one-horned rhino.

– Thanks to this collaboration and strict government protection and management, the greater one-horned rhino population has steadily increased over the last century, and has grown about 20% over the last decade.



Deaths of Greater One Horned Rhino: After reporting no poaching deaths in 2022, India has recorded two deaths of Greater One-Horned Rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) until September 2023.

– The deaths were reported from Manas National Park and Kaziranga National Park.

161. Over 860 serious charges pending against 194 MPs before polls

Source: The post is based on the article “Over 860 serious charges pending against 194 MPs before polls” published in “The Hindu” on 27th September 2023.

What is the News?

The Women’s Reservation Bill has been passed in both Houses of Parliament.

During the parliamentary debates before the passage of the Bill, several MPs voiced concern about the fact that many members have serious cases of crimes against women pending against them.

In this context, let us look at the data on the criminal cases against MPs.

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What does the data say on the criminal cases against MPs and MLAs?

MPs with criminal cases: According to the Association of Democratic Reforms' analysis of 763 Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs, 306 had criminal cases (40%) and 194 (25%) had serious criminal cases pending against them when they filed their affidavits.

– Serious criminal cases include non-bailable offences, murder, kidnapping, prevention of corruption, rape and other crimes against women.

MPs with charges related to crimes against women: There are 21 MPs who had pending charges of involvement in crimes against women at the time of their election.

– TeOver 860 serious charges pending against 194 MPs before polls these MPs were from the BJP, five were from the Congress, three from the YSR Congress Party, and the rest from other parties.

MLAs with criminal cases: Of all the MLAs analyzed, about 28% of them have declared serious criminal cases against themselves, including charges related to murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, and crimes against women, among others.

MLAs with charges related to crimes against women: A total of 114 MLAs have declared cases pertaining to crimes against women, with 14 of them specifically declaring cases related to rape (IPC Section-376).

162. [Law Commission to back simultaneous polls, suggest likely timelines for 2024 and 2029](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “[Law Commission to back simultaneous polls, suggest likely timelines for 2024 and 2029](#)” published in “[Indian Express](#)” on 27th September 2023.

What is the News?

The 22nd Law Commission of India is set to submit a report recommending simultaneous elections in the country.

What did the 21st Law Commission say on simultaneous elections?

In 2018, the 21st Law Commission headed by Justice B S Chauhan (retired), in a draft report, had recommended the ‘One Nation, One Election’ idea.

However, given the complexity of the issues involved, the Commission had said that it was desirable to have further discussions and examination on the matter, involving all the stakeholders before making final recommendations to the Government.

The term of that Commission ended before a final recommendation was made.

What is the 22nd Law Commission planning to recommend on simultaneous elections?

The [22nd Law Commission](#) was constituted under Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, former Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court.

The commission is going to recommend synchronized elections in the next five years so that the simultaneous poll rollout will start in 2029.

In order to achieve synchronized elections, the process must commence this year. The commission is also said to have dismissed the possibility of holding simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies in 2024.

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163. Centre softens angel tax rules

Source: The post is based on the article “Centre softens angel tax rules” published in “The Hindu” on 27th September 2023.

What is the News?

The Finance Ministry has notified final rules outlining valuation methods for non-resident and resident investors under the new angel tax mechanism in the Finance Act 2023.

What is Angel Tax?

Easier rules

Govt. eases rules governing investments in start-ups by non-resident investors at a premium over fair market value

- The new rules notified by the Centre provide more flexibility to merchant bankers for the valuation of a company
- Until now, the valuation of equity shares could only be based on NAV and discounted free cash flow methods
- The new policy is expected to address practical difficulties faced by investors and firms due to lack of clarity on rules



Source: The Hindu

Angel tax is levied when an unlisted company issues shares to an investor at a price higher than its fair market value (FMV).

Introduced in: It was introduced in 2012 as a measure to prevent generation and circulation of unaccounted money, experts said.

– It was called the angel tax as it initially applied primarily to Indian angel investors – usually high net worth individuals who invest in startups at a very early stage

Applicability: Earlier, angel tax was levied only on investments made by resident or local investors. However, the Budget expanded its scope to cover non-resident investors.

Criticism: Angel tax has been criticized by startups and investors, who argue that it discourages investments in startups as it is common practice to sell shares at a steep premium.

164. IICA-UNICEF conduct workshop on Business Responsibility & Sustainability Reporting (BRSR)

Source: The post is based on the article “IICA-UNICEF conducts workshop on Business Responsibility & Sustainability Reporting (BRSR)” published in “PIB” on 27th September 2023.

What is the News?

The Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) through its School of Business Environment (SoBE), in collaboration with UNICEF, organized a one-day workshop on Business Responsibility & Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) in New Delhi.

What is Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting(BRSR)?

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

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

Principles: BRSR is rooted in the nine principles outlined in the National Guidelines for Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC). The nine principles are:

- Businesses should conduct and govern themselves with integrity in a manner that is Ethical, Transparent and Accountable.
- Businesses should provide goods and services in a manner that is sustainable and safe.
- Businesses should respect and promote the well-being of all employees, including those in their value chains.
- Businesses should respect the interests of and be responsive to all their stakeholders.
- Businesses should respect and promote human rights.
- Businesses should respect and make efforts to protect and restore the environment.
- Businesses, when engaging in influencing public and regulatory policy, should do so in a manner that is responsible and transparent.
- Businesses should promote inclusive growth and equitable development.
- Businesses should engage with and provide value to their consumers in a responsible manner.

165. **Government extends support under Scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) till 30th June 2024**

Source: The post is based on the article “**Government extends support under Scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) till 30th June 2024**” published in “**PIB**” on 27th September 2023.

What is the News?

Government of India has extended support under the Scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) till 30 June 2024.

What is the Scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP)?

Launched by: Ministry of Commerce & Industry

Implemented since: 1st January 2021

Aim: To provide a mechanism for reimbursement of taxes, duties and levies, which are currently not being refunded under any other mechanism, at the central, state and local level, but which are incurred by the export entities in the process of manufacture and distribution of exported products.

Coverage: When the scheme was announced, it covered 8,731 items from most export sectors except for organic and inorganic chemicals, pharmaceuticals and iron & steel, which covered most engineering items.

– However, the government later decided to extend the scheme to the excluded sectors as well.

Tax refund rate: The tax refund rates under the scheme range from 0.5% to 4.3% depending on the sector and the product.

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166. Balsams in full bloom add to visual treat in Munnar

Source: The post is based on the article “Balsams in full bloom add to visual treat in Munnar” published in “The Hindu” on 27th September 2023.

What is the News?

Balsams (genus *Impatiens*) are in full bloom in Munnar, Kerala.

What is Balsams?



Source: The Hindu

Balsams refer to plants belonging to the genus *Impatiens*. These are flowering plants known for their small pink flowers. They are locally called as Kasithumba and Onappovu.

They are also known as ‘touch-me-not’ because of the bursting of mature seeds and seed distribution.

Found in: Of the 220 balsam species in India, 135 are found in the southern Western Ghats.

– Anamudi, the highest mountain in the Western Ghats, and the surrounding high ranges are known for the diversity of wild balsams.

– Munnar is also the major habitat of balsams. Around 46 species of balsams have been discovered in the altitude of Munnar. No other place in the world has such diversity.

Significance: Balsams are considered an important indicator of climate change, as changes in climate can affect their population.

167. Indians eat more salt than WHO recommendation

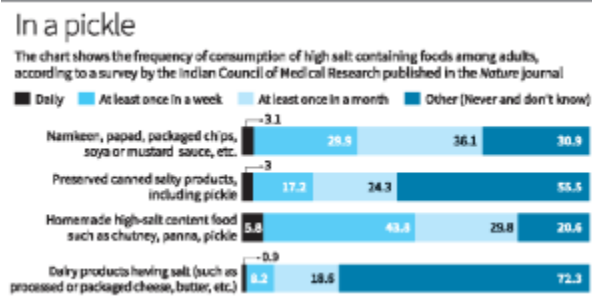
Source: The post is based on the article “Indians eat more salt than WHO recommendation” published in “The Hindu” on 26th September 2023.

What is the News?

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has published a study on salt intake among Indians in the journal Nature.

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What are the key findings of the study?



Source: The Hindu

High Salt Intake in India: The estimated mean daily salt intake in India is 8 g, which exceeds the World Health Organization's recommended limit of up to 5 g per day.

- This excessive salt intake is more common among men, people in rural areas, and those who are overweight or obese.
- Salt intake was higher in employed people, and current tobacco users and those with high blood pressure.

Why is this study relevant?

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), restricting salt intake is one of the most beneficial and cost-effective methods to reduce the incidence of blood pressure by 25%.

A high sodium level in the diet also increases the stroke and cardiac failure severity. Salty diet is responsible for 3 million deaths globally because of cardiovascular diseases.

In India, cardiovascular diseases account for an estimated 28.1% of the total deaths in India. In 2016, 1.63 million deaths were attributable to hypertension as against 0.78 million deaths in 1990.

168. World Coffee Conference in Bengaluru from Sept 25 to 28

Source: The post is based on the article “World Coffee Conference in Bengaluru from Sept 25 to 28” published in “Business Standard” on 28th September 2023.

What is the News?

Bengaluru is all set to host the 5th World Coffee Conference(WCC).

What is the World Coffee Conference(WCC)?

Organized by: International Coffee Organisation (ICO) in collaboration with the Coffee Board of India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Government of Karnataka.

Aim: To discuss, debate, and collaborate on building a sustainable coffee industry.

Theme: “Sustainability through the circular economy and regenerative agriculture”

What is the International Coffee Organization(ICO)?

International Coffee Organization (ICO) was established in 1963 under the aegis of the United Nations and following the approval of the first International Coffee Agreement in 1962.

The ICO is the only intergovernmental organization for coffee, bringing together exporting and importing Governments.

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It currently represents 93% of world coffee production and 63% of world consumption.

India is a member of this organization.

What is the Coffee Board of India?

Coffee Board is a statutory organization constituted under Section (4) of the Coffee Act, 1942.

It functions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

The Board is headquartered in Bengaluru.

Coffee Production in India:

The most well-known species of coffee grown in India are Robusta and Arabica. Robusta coffee accounts for over 70% of coffee production.

In the year 2021-22, India was the 5th largest exporter of coffee in the world with a share of about 6% of global coffee exports.

Karnataka is the largest coffee producer in India, accounting for 70 per cent of total coffee production. It is followed by Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Note: Globally, Brazil is the largest coffee-producing country in the world.

169. Social bonds explained as NABARD raises Rs 1,040 crore via its inaugural issue

Source: The post is based on the article “Social bonds explained as NABARD raises Rs 1,040 crore via its inaugural issue” published in “CNBC” on 28th September 2023.

What is the News?

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has issued its inaugural social bonds with a total size of Rs 1,040.50 crore.

What are Social Bonds?

A social bond is a type of financial instrument issued by governments, international organizations or corporations to raise funds for projects and initiatives that have a positive social impact on society.

These bonds are designed to finance projects that address various social issues, such as healthcare, education, affordable housing, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability.

First Social Bond: The Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) in Maharashtra's Pune and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2020 co-created India's inaugural Social Impact Bond (SIB).

What is Sustainability Bond Framework?

NABARD recently announced a Sustainability Bond Framework.

The framework seeks to finance and refinance new or existing eligible green and social projects.

Eligible social projects include affordable basic infrastructure, access to essential services, affordable housing, employment generation, food security, socioeconomic advancement, and empowerment.

Projects that promise energy efficiency including green buildings, energy storage, and smart grids, would also be eligible to get funding.

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170. WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit co-hosted by Ministry of Ayush adopted ecofriendly methods aimed at reducing carbon emissions

Source: The post is based on the article “WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit co-hosted by Ministry of Ayush adopted ecofriendly methods aimed at reducing carbon emissions” published in “PIB” on 28th September 2023.

What is the News?

The Ministry of Ayush has been adopting and propagating eco-friendly methods to reduce carbon emissions and environmental pollution aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The recently concluded WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit held at Gandhinagar, Gujarat is an example of that. This summit helped in the reduction of approximately 72,960 Kg of CO2 equivalent emission.

What is the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit?

[Click Here to read](#)

What are the eco-friendly methods adopted at the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit?

Paperless Approach: The event was entirely paperless, reducing the need for printed materials and transportation emissions.

Biodegradable Badges: Delegates and participants wore biodegradable badges that could be planted, containing seeds (marigolds).

Biodegradable Cutlery: Biodegradable cutlery and glass bottles were used throughout the event.

Digital Signages: Signages at the airport were primarily digital, reducing the use of printed materials.

Wooden Exhibitions: 90% of the exhibition space was constructed using wood and featured real plants and reusable materials.

Online Platforms: All event and media documents were made available online, including brochures, flyers, information booklets, and conference updates.

Reduced Travel: The summit emphasized online presence, resulting in 6,046 online streams (live and recorded), significantly reducing the need for physical travel and carbon emissions.

171. STs trail non-STs in 81 health measures: 2021 study

Source: The post is based on the article “STs trail non-STs in 81 health measures: 2021 study” published in “The Hindu” on 28th September 2023.

What is the News?

A recent study in ‘The Lancet Regional Health — Southeast Asia’ has analyzed health, nutrition, and population trends among Scheduled Tribes (STs) in India from 2016 to 2021 using data from National Family Health Surveys.

What are the key findings of the study?

Scheduled Tribes(STs) Population: According to the 2011 Census, there are over 104 million STs spread across 705 recognised ethnic groups. They make up 8.6% of India’s population.

Challenges faced by STs over non-STs: In 2021, the non-ST population outperformed the ST population in 81 out of 129 indicators. STs continued to face challenges, particularly concerning women’s status and major public health issues such as child malnutrition, anemia, insufficient vaccination coverage and disparities in fertility and mortality rates. For instance:

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- **Child Mortality:** The child mortality rate for STs was alarmingly high, with 50 out of every 1,000 children not surviving to their fifth birthday.
- **Child Malnutrition:** Child malnutrition was a significant issue, with over 40% of ST children under five being stunted and underweight.
- **High Blood Pressure:** Between 2016 and 2021, there was a notable increase in high blood pressure levels among ST men and women aged 15–49, with increases of 7.5% and 8.9%, respectively.

Indicators in which STs outperformed non-STs: STs surpassed non-STs in indicators such as gender balance, gender balance at birth, use of family planning methods, consistent treatment during pregnancy and adherence to recommended breastfeeding practices.

– Moreover, STs showed a reduced occurrence of diabetes and hypertension compared to non-STs.

Improvements made by STs between 2016 to 2021: During this period, STs made progress in indicators such as:

- **Sanitation Facilities:** Access to improved sanitation facilities improved significantly, with a 30.4 percentage point increase from 2015–2016 to 2019–2021.
- **Skilled Birth Attendance:** More births were attended by skilled health personnel, increasing by 13 percentage points.
- **Full Vaccination Coverage:** Coverage for full vaccination among children aged 12–23 months increased by 18.6 points.
- **Civil Birth Registration:** Civil registration of births among STs also rose from 76% in 2016 to 88% in 2021, indicating better documentation and recognition of births within the community,

172. **Green Ammonia Imported through VOC Port, Tamil Nadu for the first time**

Source: The post is based on the article “**Green Ammonia Imported through VOC Port, Tamil Nadu for the first time**” published in “**PIB**” on **28th September 2023**.

What is the News?

State-run V O Chidambaranar (VOC) Port located in Tamil Nadu has become the first port in India to handle green ammonia with the arrival of 20-inch tank containers loaded with the fuel from the Port of Damietta in Egypt.

What is Green Ammonia?

Ammonia is a pungent gas that is widely used to make agricultural fertilisers. Green ammonia production is where the process of making ammonia is 100% renewable and carbon-free.

Process: One way of making green ammonia is by using hydrogen from water electrolysis and nitrogen separated from the air. These are then fed into the Haber process (also known as Haber-Bosch), all powered by sustainable electricity.

– In the Haber process, hydrogen and nitrogen are reacted together at high temperatures and pressures to produce ammonia, NH₃.

What are the uses of Green Ammonia?

Energy storage: Ammonia is easily stored in bulk as a liquid at modest pressures (10-15 bar) or refrigerated to -33°C. This makes it an ideal chemical store for renewable energy.

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Zero-carbon fuel: Ammonia can be burnt in an engine or used in a fuel cell to produce electricity. When used, ammonia's only by-products are water and nitrogen. The maritime industry is likely to be an early adopter, replacing the use of fuel oil in marine engines.

Direct usage of Green Ammonia in the fertilizer industry: Green Ammonia can directly replace Grey Ammonia currently used in fertilizer plants without requiring any changes to existing infrastructure.

173. **Indian Navy to unveil 'Swavlamban 2.0' next week: Vice-Chief**

Source: The post is based on the article **"Indian Navy to unveil 'Swavlamban 2.0' next week: Vice-Chief"** published in **"The Hindu" on 28th September 2023.**

What is the News?

The Indian Navy will release its updated indigenisation roadmap called 'Swavlamban 2.0'.

What is Swavlamban?

Swavlamban is the Naval Innovation & Indigenisation Organisation's (NIIO) annual seminar.

The seminar aims to engage the Indian industry and academia in achieving 'Self-reliance in Defence Sector'.

What is Naval Innovation & Indigenisation Organisation(NIIO)?

[Click Here to read](#)

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.

174. **INDO-PACIFIC ARMIES CHIEFS CONFERENCE(IPACC)**

Source: The post is based on the article **"INDO-PACIFIC ARMIES CHIEFS CONFERENCE(IPACC)"** published in **"PIB" on 28th September 2023.**

What is the News?

The Defence Minister delivered the inaugural address at the 13th Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs' Conference(IPACC) in New Delhi.

What is the Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs' Conference(IPACC)?

Organized by: Indian Army with the US Army

Aim: To provide an opportunity for the delegates to exchange ideas and views on security and other contemporary issues of mutual interest, with core efforts directed to promote 'Peace and Stability' in the Indo-Pacific region.

Participation: The conference witnessed participation from 30 countries. 18 countries were represented by Chiefs of their respective Armies and 12 countries were represented by Heads of Delegations.

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What are the key highlights from the Defence Minister's address at the conference?

Importance of Indo Pacific region: The Indo-Pacific is no more a maritime construct, but a full-fledged geo-strategic construct, and the region is facing a complex web of security challenges, including boundary disputes & and piracy.

The Geo-Strategic Importance of the Indo-Pacific can be explained through a theoretical model by American author and speaker Mr Stephen R. Covey, which is based on two circles – **'Circle of Concern' and 'Circle of Influence'**.

– The **'Circle of Concern'** encompasses everything one cares about, including things that can be controlled and things that cannot. It includes a wide range of external factors & issues such as global events, economic conditions, other people's opinions, weather and many other aspects of life.

– The **'Circle of Influence'** comprises things over which one has direct control or can exert some degree of influence. It may involve your attitudes, behaviors, decisions, relationships, and actions.

The Defence Minister applied this model to international relations. He highlighted that nations may have overlapping **'Circles of Concern,'** which could lead to conflicts or cooperation.

– **For example,** International maritime trade routes passing through high seas beyond the Exclusive Economic Zones of any country is a relevant example. This concern was addressed through the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982. This agreement establishes the legal framework for maritime activities and addresses the issues arising from overlapping *'circles of concern'* of different nations.

Similarly, states must identify and seek to expand their **'Circle of Influence'** to promote national interests on the global stage. This may involve building partnerships, participating in regional organizations and employing diplomatic, economic or military tools strategically.

175. Gujarat turns over new leaf, bans invasive tree species: 'Adverse impact'

Source: The post is based on the article **"Gujarat turns over new leaf, bans invasive tree species: 'Adverse impact'"** published in **"Indian Express" on 28th September 2023.**

What is the News?

Gujarat Government has banned the planting of Conocarpus trees in both forest and non-forest areas due to their adverse impact on the environment and human health.

Earlier, Telangana had also banned the Conocarpus Trees.

What are Conocarpus Trees?

Conocarpus is an evergreen species with dark-green shiny leaves. They are fast-growing and can be trimmed into various shapes, making them an attractive choice.

It is native to parts of North and South America, as well as parts of Africa.

These trees have been the popular choice in recent years for beautification of public spaces to residential societies and factories.

They are being grown as trees lining public roads as well as hedges along walkways in gardens and are amenable to be trimmed into various shapes.

However, Conocarpus trees have several adverse impacts. **For instance:**

Firstly, pollen from the trees have been found to trigger health issues like cold, cough, asthma, and allergies.

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Secondly, conocarpus trees penetrate deep into the ground and extend horizontally. On several occasions, it has come to the notice of the authorities that their roots damage underground electricity cables, communication lines, drainage lines and drinking water pipes.

Thirdly, the conocarpus tree absorbs more water from soil than other species and is a threat to groundwater.

176. India ageing, elderly to make up 20% of population by 2050: UNFPA report

Source: The post is based on the article “India ageing, elderly to make up 20% of population by 2050: UNFPA report” published in “The Hindu” on 28th September 2023.

What is the News?

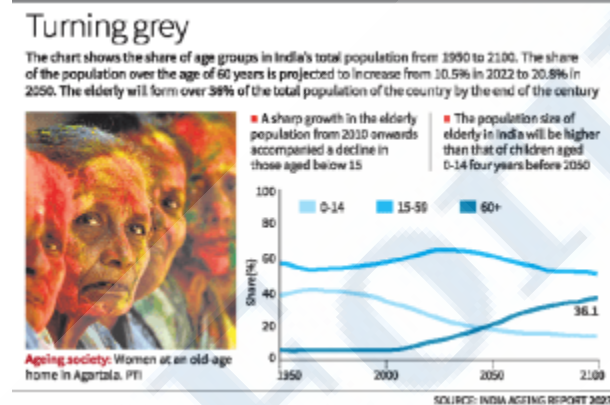
The India Ageing Report 2023 has been released by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS).

What is India Ageing Report 2023?

India Ageing Report 2023 represents a thorough review of the living conditions and welfare of older individuals in India.

The report is based on the latest data available from the Longitudinal Ageing Survey in India (LASI), 2017–18, Census of India, Population Projections by the Government of India (2011–2036) and World Population Prospects 2022 by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

What are the key findings of the report?



Source: The Hindu

Elderly Population Growth: India's elderly population is growing significantly, with a projected 41% increase in the decadal growth rate. By 2050, the share of elderly individuals in the total population is expected to double, reaching over 20%.

Elderly vs. Children: It is anticipated that by 2046, the elderly population will surpass the population of children (aged up to 15) in India.

Elderly Poverty: More than 40% of the elderly in India are in the poorest wealth quintile, and about 18.7% of them live without an income. This level of poverty may negatively impact their quality of life and healthcare utilization.

Ageing Beyond 80: The report predicts a 279% growth in the population aged 80 and above between 2022 and 2050, with a predominance of widowed and highly dependent very old women.

Factly Compilation for the Month of September 2023

Life expectancy: In India, a man aged 60 years can live another 18.3 years, while women can live 19 years. Apart from this, it also depends on the different life expectancy of the states. In Kerala and Himachal Pradesh, women can have up to 4 years more than men.

Sex Ratio Among the Elderly: The sex ratio among the elderly has been increasing since 1991, indicating more elderly women than men.

– For instance, in 1991, there were 930 elderly women per 1,000 men. After this, the ratio started to change and will continue to do so. The report estimates that by 2031, there will be 951 men for 1,078 women.

Gendered Poverty: Poverty among the elderly is often gendered, with older women more likely to be widowed, living alone, without income, and dependent on family support.

Regional Variations: There are significant regional variations in the elderly population's absolute levels and growth. Southern and select northern states have a higher share of the elderly population, while central and northeastern regions have younger populations.

What are the recommendations given by the report?

Special focus should be there on older persons in disaster-preparedness plans that are formulated henceforth.

There is a lack of credible data on various issues related to the elderly in India and more could be done by including questions on relevant and emerging issues related to older persons in the upcoming data collection exercises of the National Sample Survey, the National Family Health Survey, and the Census of India, respectively.

Government must work on increasing awareness about schemes for older persons, bring all Old Age Homes under regulatory purview and focus on facilitating in-situ ageing to the extent possible.

Government should encourage the creation and running of elderly self-help groups.

Government should also encourage *in situ* (at home) ageing as much as possible by creating short-term care facilities like creches or day-care facilities, citing better care when elderly people live with their respective families.

177. **What is geospatial intelligence? A geographer explains the powerful melding of maps and data**

Source: The post is based on the article “**What is geospatial intelligence? A geographer explains the powerful melding of maps and data**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **29th September 2023**.

What is the News?

Geospatial intelligence has offered valuable insights to help governments and organizations to protect communities from natural disasters.

What is Geospatial Intelligence?

Geospatial intelligence is the collection and integration of data from a network of technologies, including satellites, mobile sensors, ground-control stations and aerial images.

The data is then used to produce real-time maps and simulations to help identify when, where and to what extent a threat is likely to emerge.

Government officials, individuals or both can use this information to make informed decisions.

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The geospatial intelligence industry is projected to grow from a US\$61 billion enterprise in 2020 to more than \$209 billion in 2030.

What are the applications of Geospatial Intelligence?

Emergency Preparedness and Response: Geospatial intelligence aids in monitoring and responding to disasters, like tropical cyclones, by providing information on their location and strength.

– It supports search-and-rescue efforts, assesses damage, and helps in resource allocation during emergencies.

Environmental Monitoring: Geospatial intelligence monitors environmental factors like temperature, precipitation, and polar ice to anticipate disturbances.

– This data is crucial for preparing for events like heatwaves, which can impact human safety and security.

Conflict and Security: Geospatial intelligence contributes to security by tracking and reporting on events like the Russian-Ukraine war through satellite imagery.

– Commercial satellite companies now provide vital public information, extending the role of geospatial intelligence in transparency.

Transportation and Logistics: Geospatial intelligence enhances transportation, logistics, and global supply chains by utilizing GPS data.

– It provides real-time information on ship and cargo locations, improving efficiency and reliability.

Autonomous Vehicles and Urban Planning: High-resolution imagery aids in the development of autonomous vehicles and smarter urban planning.

– It helps detect features on the ground, such as bicycle lanes and traffic direction, for safer and more efficient communities.

Use in development, implementation and evaluation of digital twins: Digital twins are virtual representations of real systems – buildings or cities, for example – that mimic the systems' characteristics and can be updated in real time to reflect changing conditions in the systems.

– Digital twins are being used in many civilian and military settings to improve decision making. They are useful for modeling changes and predicting outcomes.

– Digital twins have been highly effective in conflict settings by simulating weather and terrain to help militaries and peacekeepers develop and enact strategies.

What is the significance of Geospatial Intelligence in today's world?

The need for geospatial intelligence is more important than ever.

Average temperature is projected to increase between 2 to 9.7 degrees Fahrenheit (1.1 to 5.4 degrees Celsius) by the end of the century.

The global population is expected to reach 11 billion by 2100, and urban areas are becoming denser and more prone to disasters.

Whether reconstructing the past, describing the present or anticipating the future, geospatial intelligence provides valuable information to help keep people and communities safe.

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178. Tripura becomes fourth state to introduce e-cabinet system

Source: The post is based on the article “Tripura becomes fourth state to introduce e-cabinet system” published in “Indian Express” on 29th September 2023.

What is the News?

Tripura Chief Minister has launched an e-cabinet system to promote digital infrastructure development and digitisation of government services and information

What is an eCabinet system?

eCabinet is a powerful tool for State Governments to conduct Cabinet meetings electronically.

It has been developed by the National Information Centre (NIC).

Features of eCabinet:

- Replace paper based Cabinet Meetings conserving environment
- Automate workflow activities before, during and after Meetings.
- Rich UI & UX tools, for ease of use by Ministers.
- Enhanced level of Security with Push & Pull features.
- Build institutional memory & knowledge repository, enabling quick search & retrieval.

Benefits of eCabinet:

- Saves huge resources of Paper, fuel and manpower.
- Online Data updation by Each, Information for all, leading to coordinated action.
- Better decision making, Quick retrieval of Decisions taken in meetings and review Action taken.
- Enables Virtual participation of Ministers.
- Brings in Corporate style in conduct of meetings, with standardization of data, formats and works.

How many states have adopted the eCabinet system?

Tripura has become the fourth state—and second in the Northeast—after Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh to have introduced an e-cabinet system.

179. MGNREGS social audit unit in a state of paralysis in many States

Source: The post is based on the article “MGNREGS social audit unit in a state of paralysis in many States” published in “The Hindu” on 29th September 2023.

What is the News?

The Social Audit Units under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

What is Social Audit under MGNREGA?

Social Audit is the examination and assessment of a programme/scheme conducted with the active involvement of people and comparing official records with actual ground realities.

Section 17 of the MGNREGA has mandated Social audit of all works executed under the MGNREGA.

Each State has social audit units that are supposed to work independently of the implementing authorities.

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The social audit unit's sole responsibility is to flag cases of malpractice. Recovering the money, and reprimanding the officials responsible, is up to the State governments.

What are the issues faced by the Social Audit units under MGNREGA?

Firstly, Social audit units are suffering because they are found-starved and do not have trained or adequate personnel working for them.

Secondly, less than 14% of the amount flagged by the social audit units has been recovered so far by the state.

– This dismal recovery rate threatens the credibility of the audit process since it makes the entire exercise futile.

180. **Uttar Pradesh Achieves 100% ODF Plus Coverage under Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen**

Source: The post is based on the article **“Uttar Pradesh Achieves 100% ODF Plus Coverage under Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen”** published in **“PIB” on 29th September 2023.**

What is the News?

Uttar Pradesh has achieved 100% Open Defecation Free (ODF) Plus coverage under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) programme.

What is ODF Plus village?

An ODF Plus village is one which has sustained its Open Defecation Free (ODF) status along with implementing either solid or liquid waste management systems.

Currently, 4.4 lakh (75%) villages across the nation have declared themselves ODF Plus which is a significant step towards achieving the SBM-G phase II goals by 2024-25.

So far, 11 states have been declared 100 per cent ODF Plus status out of which UP is the largest.

What is Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) – 2023 campaign?

[Click Here to read](#)

What is SBM (Grameen)?

[Click Here to read](#)

181. **What is the ‘Five Eyes’ intelligence alliance?**

Source: The post is based on the article **“What is the ‘Five Eyes’ intelligence alliance?”** published in **“The Hindu” on 29th September 2023.**

What is the News?

The Canadian Prime Minister has linked the killing of a Khalistani leader on Canadian soil to the Indian government.

This has put the spotlight on the intelligence-sharing alliance ‘Five Eyes’, which is believed to have provided the information that “helped” Canada.

What is Five Eyes Alliance?

The ‘Five Eyes’ alliance is a multilateral intelligence-sharing network of five countries, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K. and the U.S.

The alliance is both surveillance-based and tracks signals intelligence(SIGINT).

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Intelligence documents shared between the member countries are classified as 'Secret—AUS/CAN/NZ/UK/US Eyes Only,' which gave the group its title 'Five Eyes'.

Origin of the alliance: In 1943, the Britain-USA (BRUSA) agreement laid the foundations for the UK-USA (UKUSA) agreement.

– BRUSA was signed between the US War Department and the UK's intelligence and security agency Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) to share intelligence information between the two countries to support US forces in Europe, exchange personnel and develop joint regulations for the handling and distribution of highly sensitive material.

– Following this, the UKUSA was signed in 1946. Canada joined it in 1949, and New Zealand and Australia did so in 1956 forming the alliance.

What is the objective of the Five Eyes Alliance now?

The objective of the Five Eyes alliance has shifted following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new global challenges like terrorism and the growing influence of China.

The alliance have now become involved in ocean and maritime surveillance, scientific and defence intelligence analysis, medical intelligence, geospatial intelligence, counterintelligence, counterterrorism and the continuous sharing of intelligence products via a secret collective database known as 'Stone Ghost'.

What are the concerns related to the Five Eyes alliance?

There have been several concerns regarding the privacy, security and methods of working of the intelligence alliance, which remained shrouded in mystery for long.

The alliance was embroiled in a major controversy in 2013 following the disclosure of classified documents by Edward Snowden, a former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor. Mr. Snowden described the network as a supranational intelligence organization that doesn't answer to the laws of its own countries.

182. **Assam Promotes Pipe Composting: A Unique Way Of Converting Biodegradable Waste Into Manure in Two Months**

Source: The post is based on the article **"Assam Promotes Pipe Composting: A Unique Way Of Converting Biodegradable Waste Into Manure in Two Months"** published in **"PIB" on 29th September 2023.**

What is the News?

Assam is actively promoting **Pipe Composting** among its rural communities during the ongoing Swachhata Hi Seva campaign.

What is Pipe Composting Technology?

Pipe composting technology is a method of converting organic waste into compost using PVC pipes 8 – 10 inches in diameter and 1.25 metres in length. The pipes are placed vertically keeping them 25-30 cm inside the ground.

Only degradable waste can be disposed of into the pipes including leftover food, fruit and vegetable peels, flowers, dung, agricultural waste, etc.

Once in two weeks, a little cow dung and dry leaves are mixed with water and poured inside to accelerate the growth of the worms.

This should remain closed so that rainwater does not enter the pipes. Compost manure can be removed by lifting the pipe after 2 months.

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What are the benefits of Pipe Composting Technology?

Efficient Waste Conversion: It rapidly transforms biodegradable waste into valuable compost, contributing to waste reduction and environmental preservation.

Environmental Friendliness: Pipe composting is eco-friendly, as it doesn't harm the environment.

Clean and Hygienic Environment: It helps maintain a clean and hygienic environment within school campuses, promoting health and well-being.

Odorless and Fly-Proof: This composting method is odorless and prevents the attraction of flies, ensuring a pleasant atmosphere.

Space Efficiency: It doesn't require much space, making it suitable for places with limited area for waste management.

Sustainability: The system is sustainable, as the same pipes can be used repeatedly, reducing the need for additional materials.

Educational Opportunity: It offers a valuable educational opportunity for students to learn about decomposition science, the role of microorganisms and invertebrates, waste management, and sustainability, fostering environmental awareness.

183. Inside the digital world of cookies

Source: The post is based on the article **"Inside the digital world of cookies"** published in **"The Hindu" on 29th September 2023.**

What is the News?

In the digital world, cookies enhance online experiences but pose privacy and security challenges. Their usage and regulation are evolving in the digital landscape.

What are Cookies?

Cookies contain tiny amounts of data about users in text files that act like a website's memory.

As soon as we use a server, tiny amounts of data start getting stored inside a cookie.

The website uses it to identify users and their devices, which also stores these cookies. Whenever a user visits the same website, the cookies identify him/her and make it show relevant information.

What are the different types of Cookies?

Session Cookies: Temporary and disappear when you close your browser. They help websites remember your actions during a single visit.

Persistent Cookies: They are the digital equivalent of bookmarks. They stay on the device after your browsing session ends.

– They remember the login information, language preferences, and even the ads you have interacted with. They are handy for a more personalized web experience.

Secure Cookies: These are only sent over encrypted connections, making them safer from prying eyes. Secure cookies are often used for sensitive data like login credentials.

Third-Party Cookies: Come from domains other than the site you're visiting and are used for tracking and advertising.

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What are the various uses of cookies?

1) **User Authentication:** They keep you logged in on websites 2) **Personalization:** Customize your experience based on preferences 3) **Shopping Carts:** Maintain items in your cart across visits 4) **Analytics:** Help websites gather data for improvements 5) **Targeted Advertising:** Display ads matching your interests.

What are the challenges associated with cookies?

Privacy Concerns: Privacy concerns arise as cookies could track your online behaviour, which, while often harmless, can sometimes encroach upon your digital privacy.

Security Risks: Poorly secured cookies can lead to data theft.

User Consent: Regulations require websites to seek approval for certain cookies. For instance, Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 necessitates websites to acquire explicit consent from users prior to collecting or processing their personal data via cookies.

Third-Party Cookies: Controversial due to privacy concerns.

Data Overload: Too many cookies can slow down your browser.

184. Union Minister launches CRIIO 4 GOOD modules to advance gender equality and empower young people

Source: The post is based on the article “Union Minister launches CRIIO 4 GOOD modules to advance gender equality and empower young people” published in “PIB” on 29th September 2023.

What is the News?

The Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship has launched ‘CRIIO 4 GOOD’, a new online, life skills learning module to promote gender equality among girls and boys.

What is the CRIIO 4 GOOD Initiative?

Launched by: International Cricket Council (ICC), UNICEF and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Purpose: CRIIO 4 GOOD is a series of 8 cricket-based animation films to promote gender parity, equip girls with life skills and encourage their participation in sports.

Available on: The modules can be accessed free of cost on criio.com/criio4good in three languages: English, Hindi and Gujarati.

The themes of the eight modules are: leadership, problem-solving, confidence, decision-making, negotiation, empathy, teamwork and goal setting and are visualized through state-of-the-art animation using cricketing examples.

Significance: The programme uses the power of sports and the popularity of cricket as a medium to empower the girl child and spread awareness about gender equity.

Factly Compilation for the Month of September 2023

185. India retains 40th rank in the Global Innovation Index 2023

Source: The post is based on the article “India retains 40th rank in the Global Innovation Index 2023” published in “PIB” on 28th September 2023.

What is the News?

Global Innovation Index 2023 has been published by the World Intellectual Property Organization.

What is the Global Innovation Index?

[Click Here to read](#)

What are the key findings of Innovation Index 2023?



Source: Economic Times

Top Five countries: Switzerland, Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom and Singapore are the world's most innovative economies in 2023.

India: India has maintained its 40th rank in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2023. In 2015, India stood at the 81st spot and has been rising in the past eight years.

- India ranked first among the 37 lower-middle group of income and first among the 10 economies in Central and South America.
- India holds top rankings in key indicators such as: ICT services exports (5th rank), flow of venture capital (6), graduates in science and engineering (11) and global corporate R&D investors (13).
- The areas where India needs to improve a lot are infrastructure (84th rank), business sophistication (57) and institutions (56).

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186. **Jharkhand CM writes to PM, seeks recognition of Sarna religious code for tribals**

Source: The post is based on the article “**Jharkhand CM writes to PM, seeks recognition of Sarna religious code for tribals**” published in “**Indian Express**” on **28th September 2023**.

What is the News?

Jharkhand Chief Minister has written to the Prime Minister seeking recognition of the ‘Sarna’ religious code for tribals.

What is Sarna religion?

Followers of Sarna faith regard themselves as belonging to a distinct religious group.

They are nature worshippers. The holy grail of the Sarna faith is “Jal (water), Jungle (forest), Zameen (land)”.

The followers of Sarna faith pray to the trees and hills while believing in protecting the forest areas.

Believers of Sarna faith do not practice idol worship, nor do they adhere to the concept of the Varna system, heaven-hell, etc.

The followers are largely concentrated in the tribal belt states of Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam.

What are Sarna faith people demanding?

Sarna followers are demanding to include ‘Sarna’ as a separate religion for indigenous people in the next census.

A separate ‘Sarna’ code in the census is the key to a distinct identity for tribals as without it, they are classified as Hindus or Muslims or Christians.

How will Sarna’s recognition as a separate religion help?

Recognition as a separate religious community will enable better protection of their language and history.

187. **Law Commission against lowering age of consent under POCSO Act**

Source: The post is based on the article “**Law Commission against lowering age of consent under POCSO Act**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **30th September 2023**.

What is the News?

The Law Commission has recommended the government to retain the existing age of consent under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

What is the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act?

[Click Here to read](#)

What are the recommendations given by the Law Commission on the POCSO Act?

Age of Consent in POCSO Act: The Law Commission has recommended the government to retain the existing age of consent under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The current age of consent in India is 18 years.

– It said that reducing the age of consent would have a direct and negative bearing on the fight against child marriage and child trafficking.

Tacit Approval: The Law panel suggested amendments in the POCSO Act, 2012 for cases where children aged 16 to 18 give tacit approval, not legal consent.

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– The panel also advised the courts to tread with caution even in cases related to adolescent love, where criminal intention may be missing. This will ensure that the law is balanced, thus safeguarding the best interests of the child.

188. **Union Minister launches the Intelligent Grievance Monitoring System (IGMS) 2.0 Public Grievance portal and Automated Analysis in Tree Dashboard portal of DARPG**

Source: The post is based on the article “**Union Minister launches the Intelligent Grievance Monitoring System (IGMS) 2.0 Public Grievance portal and Automated Analysis in Tree Dashboard portal of DARPG**” published in “**PIB**” on **30th September 2023**.

What is the News?

The Union Minister of State for Personnel has launched the Intelligent Grievance Monitoring System (IGMS) 2.0 public grievance portal.

What is Intelligent Grievance Monitoring System (IGMS) 2.0?

IGMS is an artificial intelligence(AI) driven Grievance Monitoring System.

It aims to enhance the efficiency of the public grievance redressal process.

Developed by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in collaboration with IIT Kanpur.

The system provides real-time analysis of grievances received and resolved, as well as state-wise and district-wise data. It also helps identify the root cause of grievances, allowing for targeted interventions.

Significance: In India, the common man raises around 20 lakh grievances annually on the CPGRAMS portal. However, manually classifying and monitoring these grievances is a challenging and time-consuming task.

– Therefore, the launch of the IGMS 2.0 Dashboard will significantly expedite the grievance redressal process, enabling the concerned ministries and departments to respond more effectively.

What is the Centralized Public Grievances Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)?

[Click Here to read](#)

189. **Renewable Energy Company IREDA gets upgraded from ‘Schedule B’ to ‘Schedule A’ Central Public Sector Enterprise**

Source: The post is based on the article “**Renewable Energy Company IREDA gets upgraded from ‘Schedule B’ to ‘Schedule A’ Central Public Sector Enterprise**” published in “**PIB**” on **30th September 2023**.

What is the News?

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) has been upgraded from ‘Schedule B’ to the ‘Schedule A’ category of Central Public Sector Enterprises.

How are CPSE’s grouped into different schedules?

The Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Finance has laid down criteria for initial as well as re-categorization of Central Public Sector Enterprises(CPSEs) into appropriate schedules.

All CPSEs are required to be categorized into four schedules, namely, Schedule ‘A’, Schedule ‘B’, Schedule ‘C’ and Schedule ‘D’.

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The categorization of CPSE has implications mainly for organizational structure and salary of Board level incumbents of the concerned CPSE.

What is Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd.(IREDA)?

IREDA is a Mini Ratna (Category-I) non-banking financial institution under the administrative control of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

It is a Public Limited Government Company established as a Non-Banking Financial Institution (NBFC) in 1987.

IREDA has been notified as a “Public Financial Institution” under section 4 ‘A’ of the Companies Act, 1956 and registered as NBFC with Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Purpose: It is primarily engaged in promoting, developing and extending financial assistance for setting up projects relating to new and renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency/conservation.

Motto: ENERGY FOR EVER

Funding: IREDA generates its revenue through the interest and principal repayments from the projects it finances, as well as by raising funds from the market and through borrowings.

How will IREDA elevation from ‘Schedule B’ to the ‘Schedule A’ category help?

The elevation of IREDA to the ‘Schedule A’ category opens the door for its upgradation from “Mini Ratna (Category- I)” to “Navratna” status.

This will grant increased financial autonomy to IREDA, allowing the organization to make more strategic decisions to further its commitment to accelerating the adoption of renewable energy solutions across the country.

190. PM’s call for Ek Tareekh Ek Ghanta Ek Saath could be world’s largest voluntary effort for a cleaner India

Source: The post is based on the article “PM’s call for Ek Tareekh Ek Ghanta Ek Saath could be world’s largest voluntary effort for a cleaner India” published in “PIB” on 30th September 2023.

What is the News?

Government of India has launched ‘Ek Tareekh Ek Ghanta Ek Saath’ Initiative.

What is Ek Tareekh Ek Ghanta Ek Saath?

It is an initiative focused on hardcore cleanliness activities, specifically shramdaan (voluntary labor) for the purpose of promoting cleanliness and sanitation in India.

The goal is to mobilize citizens to come together for one hour at 10 am on 1st October and work towards cleaning various public places.

This effort is meant to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, whose Jayanti (birthday) falls on October 2nd, and to honor his vision of a clean and hygienic India.

Significance: This initiative will help in visible cleanliness and promote a cleaner and more hygienic environment across the country.

What is Swachhata Pakhwada – Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) 2023?

[Click Here to read](#)

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191. 22nd Law Commission submits report on e-FIR

Source: The post is based on the article “22nd Law Commission submits report on e-FIR” published in “PIB” on 30th September 2023.

What is the News?

The 22nd Law Commission of India has given several suggestions related to the electronic first information reports (e-FIR).

What are the recommendations given by the 22nd Law Commission report related to e-FIR?

e-FIR: At present, the electronic registration of FIRs is being implemented in eight states, but only for specific crimes.

– The Law Commission highlights that e-FIRs can be especially beneficial in areas where visiting a police station is not feasible due to security or infrastructural issues. It can also help overcome reluctance by police officers to file FIRs for petty offenses.

Limited roll out of e-FIR: The Law Commission has recommended allowing the filing of electronic first information reports (FIRs) for cognisable offenses in all cases where the accused is unknown and all cognisable offenses with a jail term of up to three years where the accused is known.

– **Note:** According to The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 cognisable offences are those in which police officers can arrest an accused without a warrant or court permission, and are typically more serious such as murder, rape or abduction.

– Non-cognisable offenses are those in which police officers do not have the authority to arrest without a warrant.

Amendments: The commission has recommended suitable amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the Information Technology Act, 2000, the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and other legislation to support e-FIR registration.

Verification and Prevention of False Complaints: To prevent false e-FIRs and complaints, the Commission suggests verifying the complainant or informant through e-authentication techniques such as OTP verification of the mobile number and mandatory uploading of valid ID proof like Aadhaar or government-approved IDs.

– The Commission also recommends imposing a minimum punishment, including imprisonment and fines, for false registration of e-complaints or e-FIRs.

Exemptions: The Commission recommended against allowing registration of e-FIR in all cases. It referred to the Supreme Court’s landmark verdict in *Lalita Kumari v. State of Uttar Pradesh*, in which the court held that preliminary enquiry should be conducted in cases pertaining to matrimonial disputes, commercial offences, medical negligence and corruption, among others.

192. New guidelines propose no admissions to students below Class 9 at coaching centres

Source: The post is based on the article “New guidelines propose no admissions to students below Class 9 at coaching centers” published in “The Hindu” on 30th September 2023.

What is the News?

Rajasthan Government has issued guidelines to regulate coaching institutes in Kota, a coaching hub.

Who recommended these guidelines?

The guidelines were recommended by a high-powered committee headed by the Principal Secretary (Higher & Technical Education) of Rajasthan Government.

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The committee was appointed to look into the issue of suicides by the students in the coaching hub of Kota.

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

What are the key guidelines issued by the high-powered committee in Rajasthan?

- Students below Class 9 may not be admitted to coaching institutes.
- Confidentiality of test results is essential.
- Batches should be formed alphabetically rather than based on students' ranks.
- There should be no glorification of toppers.
- No segregation of students based on their ranks.
- A policy should be formulated for an easy exit from coaching centers with a refund of fees within 120 days.
- Routine tests at coaching institutes were halted for two months to reduce mental pressure on students.