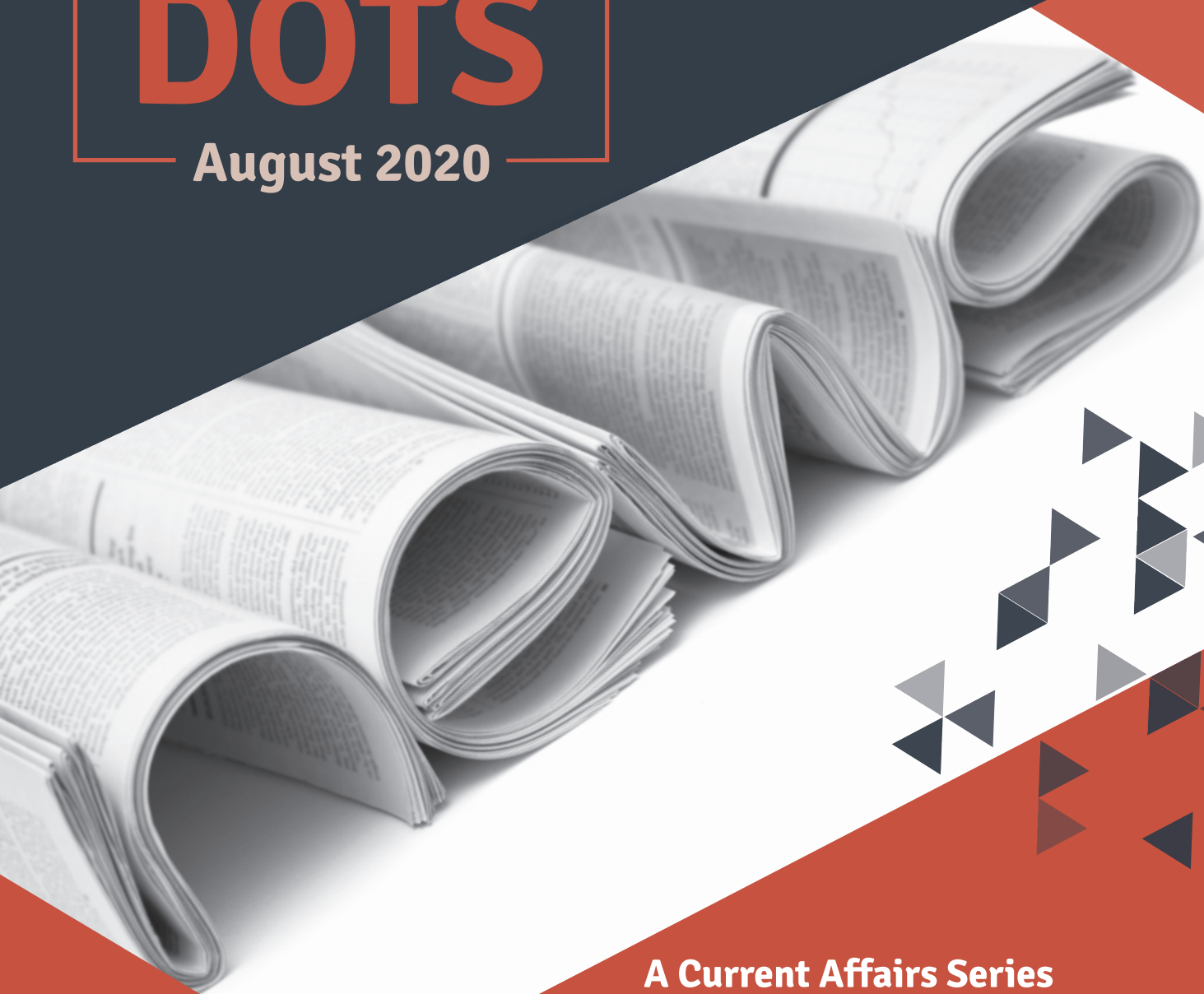Career Launcher | IAS

JOIN THE DOTS

August 2020

A Current Affairs Series for UPSC Examination

- National Recruitment Agency to Conduct Common Eligibility Test
- Connectivity to Andaman & Nicobar Islands (CANI)
- India-Canada IC-IMPACTS Annual Research Conference
- Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) Completes 6 Years
- Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN)
- ITEC-NCGG International Workshop on COVID-19
- National Council for Transgender Persons

JOIN THE DOTS!

Compendium – August 2020

Dear Students,

With the present examination pattern of UPSC Civil Services Examination, General Studies papers require a lot of specialization with 'Current Affairs'. Moreover, following the recent trend of UPSC, almost all the questions are based on news as well as issues. CL IAS has now come up with **'JOIN THE DOTS! AUGUST 2020'** series which will help you pick up relevant news items of the day from various national dailies such as The Hindu, Indian Express, Business Standard, LiveMint, PIB and other important sources.

'JOIN THE DOTS! AUGUST 2020' series will be helpful for prelims as well as Mains Examination. We are covering every issue in a holistic manner and covered every dimension with detailed facts. This edition covers all important issues that were in news in the month of June 2019. Also, we have introduced Prelim base question for Test Your Knowledge which shall guide you for better revision. In addition, it would benefit all those who are preparing for other competitive examinations.

We have prepared this series of documents after some rigorous deliberations with Toppers and also with aspirants who have wide experience of preparations in the Civil Services Examination.

For more information and more knowledge, you can go to our website

https://www.careerlauncher.com/upsc/

"Set your goals high, and don't stop till you get there"

All the best!!
Team CL

Career Launcher IAS

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Prelims Perspicuous Pointers

General Studies I: Indian Heritage and Culture, History and Geography of the World and Society

General Studies II: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations

General Studies III: Science & Technology, Economic Developments, Biodiversity, Environment, Internal Security and Disaster management

Prelims Perspicuous Pointers

Join the dots!
A current affairs series for UPSC Examination

Prelims Factoids: SKOCH Gold Award

Relevance IN – Prelims (about SKOCH 2020)

What's the NEWS

• Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) has received SKOCH Gold Award for its "Empowerment of Tribals through IT enabled Scholarship Schemes" project of Scholarship Divison of the Ministry.

Know! more about it

• The 66th SKOCH 2020 Competition was entitled "INDIA RESPONDS TO COVID THROUGH DIGITAL GOVERNANCE" and MoTA chose to participate in DIGITAL INDIA & E-GOVERNANCE - 2020 Competition

• To assimilate with the larger vision of 'Digital India' and to realize the cherished goal of e-governance, MoTA has integrated all 5 Scholarship Schemes with Direct Benefit Transfer Portal under the guidance of DBT Mission.

Know! about SKOCH award

• **SKOCH** Award, instituted in 2003, is the highest civilian honour in the country conferred by an independent organisation.

• It recognises people, projects and institutions that go the extra mile to make India a better nation.

• **SKOCH** Award covers the best of efforts in the area of digital, financial and social inclusion.

• **SKOCH Group** is India›s leading Think Tank, dealing with socio-economic issues, with a focus on inclusive growth since 1997.

• **SKOCH Group** has instituted India›s highest independent civilian honours in the field of finance, technology, economics and social sector.

Government Schemes: Khadi Agarbatti Aatmanirbhar Mission

Relevance IN – Prelims (about "Khadi Agarbatti Aatmanirbhar Mission)

What's the NEWS

• Union Minister for MSME, has approved a unique employment generation program proposed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) to make India Aatmanirbhar in Agarbatti production.

• The program named as "Khadi Agarbatti Aatmanirbhar Mission" aims at creating employment for unemployed and **migrant workers** in different parts of the country while increasing domestic Agarbatti production substantially.

Know! about Khadi Agarbatti Aatmanirbhar Mission

• The **pilot project** will be launched soon and on full-fledged implementation of the project, thousands of jobs will be created in the Agarbatti industry.

- The scheme designed by KVIC on **PPP mode** is unique in the sense that in a very less investment
- Under the scheme, KVIC will provide Automatic Agarbatti making machines to the artisans through the **successful private Agarbatti manufacturers** who will sign the agreement as business partners.
- It will create sustainable employment and help private Agarbatti manufacturers to scale up Agarbatti production without any capital investment by them.
- KVIC will provide 25% subsidy on the cost of the machines and will recover the remaining 75% of the cost from the artisans in easy instalments every month.
- The business partner will provide the raw material to the artisans for making Agarbatti and will pay them wages on job work basis.
- Cost of artisans' training will be shared between KVIC and the private business partner wherein KVIC will bear 75% of the cost while 25% will be paid by the business partner.
- After recovery of the 75% cost, the ownership of the machines will automatically be transferred to the artisans.
- The scheme has been designed in wake of the two major decisions taken by the government – **import restriction on Raw Agarbatti and increase in import duty on Bamboo sticks**

Prelims Factoids: BHARAT AIRFIBER

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Bharat Air Fibre services)

What's the NEWS

- Bharat Air Fibre Services (Wireless Internet Connections on demand) inaugurated at Akola in Maharashtra.

Know! more about Bharat Air Fibre Services

- The Bharat Air Fibre services are **introduced by BSNL as part of digital India initiates by the Government of India and** it aims of providing Wireless Connectivity in the range of 20 KMs from the BSNL Locations and thus customers at remote places also will be benefitted
- BSNL is providing the "Bharat Air Fibre Services" through local business partners of BSNL
- Bharat Air Fibre services opens new way of fastest Wireless internet connectivity as well Voice services in reasonable cost.
- BSNL provides Bharat Air Fibre connectivity upto 100 Mbps speed.

Prelims Factoids: e-Rakshabandhan

Relevance IN – Prelims (E-Raksha Bandhan + about disha police station)

What's the NEWS

- Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy launched 'E-Raksha Bandhan', aimed at **creating awareness among the public on Cybercrimes across the State**

Know! about E-Raksha Bandhan

- The Andhra Pradesh Police, Crime Investigation Department (CID), FM Radio, Cyber Crime Prevention Against Women and Children (CCPWC), Cyber Peace Foundation and other organisations are organising the month-long online awareness drive.
- The participants will be explained different types of cybercrimes, and tackling techniques and alarm raising methods.
- As many as 1 lakh women, girls and the general public would be trained through 'E-Raksha Bandhan' up to August 31.

Additional info

Disha police stations

- The Andhra Pradesh government has opened up Disha police stations across 18 police district headquarters **to tackle cases of crimes against women in a speedy manner.**

- Eighteen such Disha police stations have been set up in the entire state, besides an exclusive court in each district to try cases relating to crimes against women and children.

- Special Public Prosecutors will also be appointed for these courts to ensure a better conviction, which also enables to strengthen the current system by four times

- Disha Police Stations are doing a good job and investigation of 167 cases relating to crime against women have been completed and chargesheets have been filed in the courts

- The victims can complain through Disha APP and in Disha Police Stations on harassment and cybercrimes.

Prelims Factoids: Khelo India Mobile App online training program

Relevance IN -Prelims (about the online training program + about TOTs

What's the NEWS

- The Sports Authority of India, in association with Education Boards CISCE and CBSE, will host an online program for training of Physical Education (PE) Teachers from CISCE Schools on "**Khelo India Fitness Assessment of School Going Children".**

Know! more about the programme

- The program, starting August 7, will target 7500 participants across 2615 CISCE schools in two zones.

- This large-scale training is being organized to assess the fitness levels of the school children and to identify potential future champions from a vast pool of grassroots talent.

- In this current situation, Training-of-Trainers (TOTs) in their original format and physical assessments of students in schools could not be conducted till children and teachers start going back to schools again.

- School Principals or Head of Institutes will be made aware about the need to empower their PE Teachers with knowledge, attitude and skills for undertaking the Khelo India Fitness Assessment through the **Khelo India Mobile App (KIMA)** besides giving them goals for 2020-21.

- This session is titled "**Whole School Approach to Fitness".**

- The training will be provided by **selected Master Trainers** who had conducted various National and Regional level TOTs, both offline and online, in 2019

- **Training of Trainer (TOT) programmes** are aimed at training the Resource Persons/Master Trainers, who will further train the teachers at zonal/ district levels for conducting various physical fitness tests and collection of data of fitness tests online.

Prelims Factoids: Railways commissions longest bridge in the South Western Zone on Bhima river

Relevance IN -Prelims (about bhima river)

What's the NEWS

- The South Western Railway commissioned the Lachyan-Hotgi section, which is 33 km long, **as part of the doubling project from Hotgi-Kudgi-Gadag (284 km)** which was sanctioned by Railway Board in 2014-15.

- It connects Karnataka with Maharashtra through Bijapur and Sholapur districts.
- The track passes through the 670 m long important bridge over River Bhima, the longest bridge in the zone comprising 14 spans of 45.7 m each.
- Turning the nationwide lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic into an opportunity, the Indian Railways cleared the backlog of 200 projects of critical importance in key sections.

Know! about Bhima river

- The Bhima River is a major river in Western India and South India. It flows southeast for 861 kilometres through Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Telangana states, before entering the Krishna River.
- It is a major **tributary of the Krishna River**
- In the **Bhimashankar heights of the Western Ghats**, it rises and flows southeastward for 450 miles or 725 km in Maharashtra to join the Krishna in Karnataka.
- The major **tributaries are the Sina and Nira rivers**.
- The drainage area of the Bhima is defined by the Western Ghats (west), the Balaghat Range (north), and the Mahadeo Hills (south).
- There is a major dam on the Bhima river called **as Ujjaini Dam** which is also known as Bhima Dam or Bhima Irrigation Project on the Bhima River.

Prelims Factoids: Ministry of HRD and MyGov jointly organise online essay competition

Relevance IN -Prelims (about online essay writing competition and its nodal agency)

What's the NEWS

- The **Ministry of Human Resource Development in partnership with MyGov** is organizing an online essay writing competition for specific age of school students (**IX to X or Secondary Stage and XI to XII or Higher Secondary)** across the country.

Know! more about it

- The **NCERT will be the Nodal Agency for this event.**
- Selection of essays will be taken up at two levels. Firstly, States/UTs level will finalise the essays.
- Next the selected 10 essays from each state will become the pool of selected essays for the final selections at national level by a team of experts decided by NCERT.
- 30 essays will be selected in each category i.e. Secondary stage and Higher Secondary stage by the NCERT. Prizes will be announced for the national level winners soon.

Prelims Factoids: First ever online patriotic film festival kicks off on 7th August

Relevance IN -Prelims (about the first ever online patriotic film festival)

What's the NEWS

- National Film Development Corporation is organizing a **first of its kind, online patriotic film festival**.

Know! more about the fest

- The festival, a part of Independence Day Celebrations 2020 by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, begins on **7**th August, 2020 and runs till 21st August.

- The festival will showcase Indian history that marks the bravery of our freedom fighters and aims to create a festive and patriotic mood among Indians across the globe.

- The festival will showcase high quality Independence Day themed patriotic films daily at the websitewww. cinemasofindia.com**free of cost**.

- Critically acclaimed **films from various Indian languages** including Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Gujarati and Malayalam will showcased in the festival.

- The selection showcases a consolidated collection of films from National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), National Film Archive of India (NFAI), Children's Film Society India (CFSI) and Films Division.

Miscellaneous: India Water Resources Information System

Relevance IN -Prelims (about India Water Resources Information System)

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Jal Shakti has launched a new version of the India Water Resources Information System (India-WRIS) with new functionalities and features.

Know! about India-WRIS

- Open to the public, and accessible through **the web portal www.indiawris.gov.in,** this portal contains information related to Water Resources through dashboards for rainfall, water levels & discharge of rivers, water bodies, ground water levels, reservoir storages, evapotranspiration and soil moisture, as well as modules on water resources projects, water bodies, hydro-met data availability and tools for GIS layer editing.
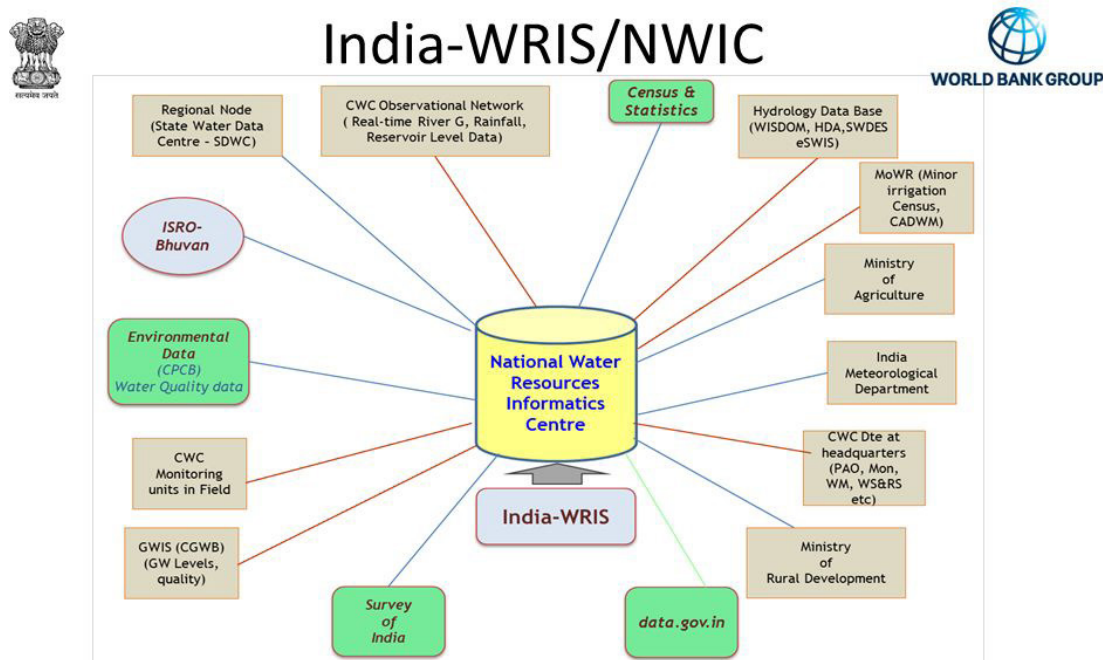
- Creation of State Nodes of India-WRIS
- Development of Web Services
- Support for creation of State-WRIS
- Linkages of various models/outputs

- The Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS), under the **National Hydrology Project,** launched the first version of India Water Resources Information System (India-WRIS) in July, 2019.

- Since then, a number of new functionalities and features have been added into the system.

- India WRIS is, at present, receiving data from many central and state agencies like CWC, CGWB, IMD, NRSC, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat etc. on regular basis.
- The MoJS has established a dedicated organization, **National Water Informatics Centre (NWIC)** to maintain and update India WRIS.
- The basis for all hydro-met observation data is the Water Information Management System (WIMS).
- Through a secured login, **Central and State Water Agencies** can enter, analyse, validate and manage data for water level (Both Surface Water & Ground Water), flow, water quality, sediment and many climate parameters.
- The system includes time series data obtained through manual readings as well as telemetry data received by means of GPRS or satellite.

Know! how Various user groups can utilize the information?

- **Farmers** and farmer Welfare Associations can plan crops and cropping pattern based on the rainfall, water availability in storages and ground water aquifers
- **Individuals** can use the data as per their requirement, to know the availability of water in their locality, ground water level, Level of water in the nearby river and such many facts.
- **Planners and Administrators** can utilize this data of their States, Basins for proper utilization of water and to reduce the impact of Flood and Drought.
- **Researchers** can utilize the data for water related studies and Modelling purposes as the data frequency required for such studies is available.

Prelims Factoids: Gustave Trouvé Award

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Aditya + about Gustave Trouvé Award)

What's the NEWS

- Aditya, India's **first solar ferry** that bagged the prestigious Gustave Trouvé Award for Excellence in Electric Boats and Boating

Know! about Aditya and Gustave Trouvé Award

- Aditya is India's first solar ferry. It plies on the Vaikom - Thavanakadavu route in the Alappuzha district of Kerala.
- Recently, on July 27th, Aditya bagged the prestigious Gustave Trouvé Award for Excellence in Electric Boats and Boating.
- It is the only international award given to individuals & companies building & innovating in state-of-the-art electric boats.

- Over 10,000 people from across the globe voted to choose the best solar boats amongst 50 small and big boats from Europe, the U.S., and Singapore
- Aditya was declared as the world's best electric boat, in the category of 'ferries designed for paid passenger service.'

Prelims Factoids: Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about DIAL)

What's the NEWS
- Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), a GMR Group-led consortium, announced that it has developed a **first-of-its-kind portal** where India-bound international arriving flyers can fill the mandatory self-declaration form and also apply online for exemption from mandatory institution quarantine process.
- The online forms have been developed in **collaboration with the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of External Affairs** and Governments of various states and union territories
- This will help in making passengers' journey more convenient and comfortable in a contactless way as they won't have to fill the physical copies of the forms on arrival.

About DIAL
- The GMR Group led, Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) is a consortium; **comprising of GMR Group, Airports Authority of India and Fraport.**
- The consortium has a mandate to finance, design, build, operate and maintain the Delhi Airport for 30 years with an option to extend it by another 30 years.

Space Awareness: SpaceX launched a new batch of Starlink internet-beaming satellites

Relevance IN – Prelims (about SpaceX Starlink project)

What's the NEWS
- SpaceX has resumed launching batches of dozens of satellites in its gambit to blanket Earth with high-speed internet access.
- The satellites are a new "VisorSat" variety to make them less shiny to the ground and especially to astronomers' telescopes.

Know! about Strlink
- Starlink is the name of a satellite network that the private spaceflight company SpaceX is developing to provide low-cost internet to remote locations.
- While SpaceX eventually hopes to have as many as 12,000 satellites in this so-called megaconstellation, the size and scale of the project have flustered astronomers and amateur skywatchers, who fear that the bright, orbiting objects will interfere with observations of the universe.

Know! more about Starlink project
- SpaceX, the rocket company founded by Elon Musk, plans to surround Earth with Starlink satellites and provide global high-speed, low-latency internet service from orbit.
- Thw new batch of Starlink internet-beaming satellites equipped with **visors to block sun glare.**
- The new "VisorSats" should make the fleet of satellites less visible in the night sky.
- The visors will probably make the satellites less bright, but it won't stop them from interfering with astronomy
- Starlink internet project deploy tens of thousands of the broadband internet-beaming satellites into low-Earth orbit.
- The first batch of 60 high-speed Starlink internet satellites, each weighing about 500 pounds, flat-packed into a stack prior to their launch aboard a Falcon 9 rocket on May 23, 2019.
- SpaceX isn't the only company building a massive fleet of satellites. Companies like Amazon and OneWeb have similar aspirations to establish their own fleets

Environment: World Elephant Day

Relevance IN – Prelims (about booklet on "Best practices of Human-Elephant Conflict Management in India + Surakhsya portal)

What's the NEWS

- The Minister releases a booklet on "**Best practices of Human-Elephant Conflict Management** in India
- The booklet is a pictorial guide of a variety of management inventions successfully adopted by the elephant range states and serves as a reference manual for adoption of the best possible site specific mitigation measures that can be **adopted to reduce human – elephant conflict.**
- Ministry also launched beta version of a **portal on Human-Elephants Conflict.**
- The **National Portal on human elephant conflict** called "**Surakhsya**" for collection of real time information & also for managing the conflicts on a real time basis will help to set the data collection protocols, data transmission pipelines and data visualization tools to enable policy-makers to leverage HEC data for policy formulation and for preparation of Action Plans for mitigation of conflicts.
- At present the beta version of the portal is being launched for data testing before the pan India roll out for adoption by the states, which is likely to be done before year end.

Know! about World Elephant Day

- **World Elephant Day** celebrated on **August 12** is an international annual event, dedicated to the preservation and protection of the world's elephants.
- The goal of World Elephant Day is to create awareness on elephant conservation, and to share knowledge and positive solutions for the better protection and management of wild and captive elephants.
- **Asian elephants are listed as "Endangered**" on the IUCN Red List of threatened species.
- This has been done most of the range states except India, have lost their viable elephant populations due to loss of habitats & poaching etc.
- The current population estimates indicate that there are about 50,000 -60000 Asian elephants in the world. More than 60 % of the population is held in India.
- Indian Elephant has also been listed in the Appendix I of the Convention of the Migratory species in the recently concluded Conference of Parties of CMS 13 at Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat in February 2020.
- Elephant is the Natural Heritage Animal of India and India also celebrates this day to spread awareness towards conservation of the species.

Prelims Factoids: BEEG (Bio -compost Enriched Eco-friendly Globule)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about BEEG)

What's the NEWS

- IIT Kanpur has developed **indigenous seed balls** named BEEG (Bio -compost Enriched Eco-friendly Globule) which will help people and farmers in plantation with safety in Corona times and will also provide employment to people.

Know! about BEEG

- The BEEG is developed in collaboration with Agnys Waste Management Private Limited (start-up at IIT Kanpur).
- The Seed Balls are comprised of indigenous variety of seeds, compost, and clay.
- There is no need for digging pits for planting saplings.
- These seed walls are to be thrown at aimed places and they will germinate when come into contact with water.
- BEEG is enriched with the right ingredients and seeds to germinate early, and are the best way to utilise Monsoon and plant as many trees as possible without risking lives by social gathering during Covid 19.

International Organisations: KavKaz 2020

Relevance IN – Prelims (about KavKaz 2020 +SCO+ RATS).

What's the NEWS

- India gets ready to participate in the Russian Kavkaz 2020 strategic command-post exercise.
- China and Pakistan are also invited to participate in KavKaz 2020 as both countries are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Know! about Kavkaz 2020

- **A tri-service contingent** with 150 Army personnel and from Air Force and Navy will be heading to Astrakhan in Southern Russia for the exercise.
- The exercise is scheduled for September 15-26 and there will be participation from atleast 18 countries in KavKaz 2020 including countries from Central Asian Republics who are part of SCO as well as China, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey.

About SCO and India's participation in these drills

- SCO is a eight-member economic and security bloc and India and Pakistan were admitted as full members back in 2017.
- It is a **permanent intergovernmental international** organisation founded in 2001 with its secretariat based in Beijing, China.
- The founding members of this grouping include **China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.**
- The grouping has been having multilateral drills and has **developed Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS).**

About RATS

- It is a permanent organ of the SCO and regarded as very important in the counterterrorism operations by the member countries and has its headquarters based in Tashkent.
- Security officials of all the eight countries sit at the **RATS Headquarters in Tashkent.**
- In fight against terrorism, extremism and separatism, RATS plays a very critical role, as it gives a chance to all to test their intelligence gathering and exchange; technology complement mechanisms between the members states of SCO.

NITI Aayog: Student Entrepreneurship Programme 2.0 (SEP 2.0)

Relevance IN -Prelims (about SEP 2.0 + about ATLs)

What's the NEWS

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, in collaboration **with Dell Technologies launched** Student Entrepreneurship Programme 2.0 (SEP 2.0) **for young innovators of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs).**

Student Entrepreneurship Programme 2.0 (SEP 2.0)

- SEP 2.0 will allow student innovators to work closely with Dell volunteers.

- They will receive mentor support; prototyping and testing support; end-user feedback; intellectual property registration and patenting of ideas, processes, and products; manufacturing support; as well as the launch support of the product in the market.

- Dell is leveraging emerging technologies to empower students to craft their own experiences, thereby enabling them to develop an innovative mindset.

- Atal Innovation Mission aims to create over a million neoteric innovators and potential job creators of the country.

- The entrepreneurial capabilities of the budding Atal Tinkering Lab innovators through the Student Entrepreneurship Programme encourages young aspiring school students, as well as creates a value-adding recognition platform for innovative talent across the country.

Know! about SEP 1.0

- SEP 1.0 began in January 2019. Through a 10-month-long rigorous programme, the top 6 teams of ATL Marathon—a nationwide contest where students identify community challenges and create grassroots innovations and solutions within their ATLs—got a chance to transform their innovative prototypes into fully functioning products, which are now available in the market.

Additional info

Atal Tinkering Lab

- In ATLs, students of class 6th to 12th acquire a problem-solving attitude, develop innovative solutions leveraging technologies like 3D printers, robotics, miniaturised electronics, IOT and programming and DIY kits, with support from teachers and mentors.

Atal Innovative Mission

- AIM is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

- AIM's objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of the country.

Six major initiatives of AIM:

- Atal Tinkering Labs-Creating problem-solving mindset across schools in India.

- Atal Incubation Centers-Fostering world class start-ups and adding a new dimension to the incubator model.

- Atal New India Challenges-Fostering product innovations and aligning them to the needs of various sectors/ministries.

- Mentor India Campaign- A national Mentor network in collaboration with public sector, corporates and institutions, to support all the initiatives of the mission.

- Atal Community Innovation Centre- To stimulate community centric innovation and ideas in the unserved / underserved regions of the country including Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

- ARISE-To stimulate innovation and research in the MSME industry.

Prelims Factoids: Connecting, Communicating, Changing

Relevance IN -Prelims (about the book)

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, unveiled e-version of the book 'Connecting, Communicating, Changing' **the Vice President of India's three years in office.**

- The e-book was launched along with its print coffee table version which was released by Union Minister of Defense Shri Rajnath Singh.
- The book has been brought out by Publications Division, captures through words and pictures the variegated activities of the Vice President, including his travels in India and abroad.

Health and Family Welfare: National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19

MINUTES OF EXPERTS' MEET

- **States have been asked** to not chart separate pathways for procurement
- **India will use manufacturing infra** to supply to key neighbours and low & middle income countries
- **The National Expert Group** on vaccine administration met on Wednesday
- **It looked at the financial resources** required for procuring the vaccine
- **The expert group sought inputs** from the Standing Technical Sub-Committee of the NTAGI
- **India is open to both** national and international vaccine candidates

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the role of National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 + about NTAGI)

What's the NEWS
- **National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration** for COVID-19, met for the first time on 12th August.
- The meeting was **chaired by Dr V K Paul, Member Niti Aayog** along with Secretary (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) as co-Chair.

Know! about the meeting highlights
- The expert group deliberated on **conceptualization and implementation mechanisms** for creation of a digital infrastructure for inventory management and delivery mechanism of the vaccine including tracking of vaccination process with particular focus on last mile delivery.
- They discussed on broad parameters guiding the selection of COVID-19 vaccine candidates for the country and sought **inputs from Standing Technical Sub-Committee of National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI).**
- The group delved on the procurement mechanisms for COVID-19 vaccine, including both indigenous and international manufacturing along with guiding principles for prioritization of population groups for vaccination.

Know! about NATGI
- **The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI)** was established by an order of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) in 2001.
- **As India's apex advisory body on immunization,** the NTAGI provides guidance and advice to the MoHFW on provision of vaccination and immunization services for the effective control of vaccine preventable diseases in the country.
- Since its establishment, the NTAGI has been reconstituted twice, in 2010 and 2013.
- NTAGI now includes a Standing Technical Sub-Committee (STSC).
- The STSC is tasked with undertaking technical review of scientific evidence on matters related to immunization policy and programmes.
- Final recommendations are drafted by the NTAGI taking into account the scientific review by the STSC and any other relevant evidence.

- The overall objective of the NTAGI is to provide advice to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on the strategies to control the burden and appropriately evaluate the impact of immunization on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPDs) in the country.

Prelims Factoids: Apparel Export Promotion Council

Relevance IN – Prelims (about AEPC and its objective)

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has called upon the **Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC)** to take measures for increasing exports 2 times.
- The Virtual Workshop- A Joint initiatives of Apparel Expert Promotion Council and MSME inaugurated by the Ministry
- The Workshop had participants from the MSME and apparel industry

Know! about AEPC

- The **Apparel Export Promotion Council** (**AEPC**) is the official organisation recognised by the government for promoting the **export** of **apparels**.
- Objective - To promote, advance, increase, develop export of all types of readymade garments, excluding, woollen knitwear and garments of leather, jute and hemp.
- Incorporated in 1978, AEPC is the official body of apparel exporters in India that provides invaluable assistance to Indian exporters as well as importers/international buyers who choose India as their preferred sourcing destination for garments.
- AEPC today is a powerful body for the promotion and facilitation of garment manufacturing and their exports.
- For Indian exporters, AEPC is a one-stop shop for information advise technical guidance workforce and market intelligence.

Prelims Factoids: World's 'first' COVID-19 vaccine Sputnik V

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Sputnik V vaccine)

What's the NEWS

- Russia became the first country in the world to register a COVID-19 vaccine after less than two months of human testing

Know! about the vaccine

- Developed by Gamaleya Research Institute and the Russian defence ministry, the vaccine underwent necessary tests
- The COVID-19 vaccine offers lasting immunity from the virus.
- The vaccine is expected to provide immunity from the coronavirus for up to two years
- Vaccine used inanimate particles created on the basis of adenovirus
- It is based on the **DNA of a SARS-CoV-2 type adenoviru**s, a common cold virus.
- To make it effective, the vaccine uses the weakened virus to deliver small parts of a pathogen and stimulate an immune response.

Know! about Sputnik V

- Moscow has dubbed its new coronavirus vaccine "Sputnik V" after the Soviet satellite
- Sputnik was the first-ever artificial Earth satellite launched mankind.
- The Soviet Union launched it into an elliptical low Earth orbit on 4 October 1957.
- At the time, Sputnik was an invention way ahead of its time and had left the USSR's then adversary USA in a state of shock.
- Sputnik gave birth to the space age. The successful launch shocked the world, giving the former Soviet Union the distinction of putting the first human-made object into space.

Prelims Factoids: International Youth Day (12 August)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about International youth day and National Youth day)

What's the NEWS

- International Youth Day was designated by the United Nations (UN) in the year 1999, in an attempt to raise awareness regarding the cultural and legal issue concerning youth.

Know! about IYD 2020

- The first IYD was observed on 12 August 2000 and has been observed annually ever since.
- In 1999, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation made the 'World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth', and subsequently International Youth Day came to be celebrated annually.
- This day is meant to signify and highlight the importance of young people, not just as a future generation, but also as the current driving force of change in the world.
- The theme of International Youth Day 2020, **"Youth Engagement for Global Action"** seeks to highlight the ways in which the engagement of young people at the local, national and global levels is enriching national and multilateral institutions
- In observance of the day, the UN has launched a social media campaign, **#31DaysOfYouth,** that is celebrating young people all throughout the month of August, leading up to and following International Youth Day.

This year's IYD seeks to put the spotlight on youth engagement through the following three interconnected streams:

- Engagement at the local/community level
- Engagement at the national level
- Engagement at the global level.

National Youth Day (12 January)

- Since 1985, India celebrates National Youth Day on January 12 every year.
- This day is celebrated on the birthday of the social reformer, philosopher and great thinker Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary.
- In 1984, it was declared by the Government of India that 12th January will be observed as National Youth Day.
- The motive behind the government's move to celebrate this day was to imbibe the students and youth with the philosophy and ideals of the Vivekananda, who brought a change in the thought process of the youth.

Know! about Swami Vivekananda

- January 12 marks the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, who was a true luminary, credited with enlightening the western world about Hinduism.
- He was an ardent disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and a major force in the revival of Hinduism in India.
- He pushed for national integration in colonial India, and his famous speech remains as the one that he gave in Chicago in 1893.
- To honour his many contributions to the country, the government of India, in the year 1984, declared his birthday as National Youth Day, and the day has been celebrated since.

Defence: Indian Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Sarthak' launched

Relevance IN – Prelims (about OPV Sarthak)

What's the NEWS

- An Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) for the Indian Coast Guard was launched and re-christened as Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Sarthak'

Know! about OPV Sarthak

- OPV Sarthak is the 4th in the series of five OPVs.
- It has been **designed & built indigenously by M/s Goa Shipyard Limited** (GSL) in line with the Prime Minister's vision of 'Make in India'.
- The Ship is fitted with state-of-the-art Navigation and Communication equipment, sensor and machinery.
- The 105 Metre ship displaces approximately 2350 tons and is propelled by two 9100 KW diesel engines designed to attain a maximum speed of 26 knots, with an endurance of 6000 Nautical Miles.
- The ship is designed to embark and carry a twin-engine helicopter, four high speed boats and one inflatable boat for swift boarding and Search & Rescue operations.
- The ship is also capable of carrying limited pollution response equipment to undertake oil spill pollution response at sea.
- The ship launched today, has about **70% indigenous content,** thus providing the necessary fillip to the Indian shipbuilding industry
- The ship will be deployed extensively for EEZ surveillance, Coastal Security and other duties as enshrined in the Coast Guard charter of duties, to safeguard the maritime interests of the Nation.

Indian Coast Guard

- It is the fourth largest Coast Guard in the world, it has established itself as a reliable force.
- It not only protects our **coastline and coastal community**, but also protects economic activities, and maritime environment in the **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).**

Know! about the 05 CG OPV project of Goa Shipyard ltd (GSL)

- The 05 CG OPV project is a follow-on of 06 CG OPV Project, completed in 2017.
- With focused efforts towards 'Make In India', the indigenous content has been increased from 60%, for 06 CG OPV Project, to 70% for the ongoing 05 CG OPV Project.
- The contract for 5 CGOPVs was signed by GSL with MoD on 26th Aug 2016 and commencement of production of first vessel was formally started within 3 months
- These Vessels are scheduled to be delivered between Jan 2020 to Jun 2021.
- The Naval OPV is based on the in-house design developed by GSL through its R&D. Four of these vessels have been constructed for the Indian Navy by GSL.
- These vessels have successfully proved the specified performance and sea worthiness during operations in service with the Indian Navy.
- Similar vessels are under construction at GSL **for Sri Lanka Navy**.

Know! about the Samarth-class offshore patrol vessel

- These are a **series of eleven offshore patrol vessels** being built by Goa Shipyard Limited for the Indian Coast Guard.
- The construction of Samarth class was motivated by a desire to triple the Coast Guard assets in the aftermath of 2008 Mumbai attacks.
- They are an improvement over the earlier Sankalp class, with a larger beam and more powerful engines.
- The ships are being constructed in two batches—a batch of six ordered in May 2012 that was completed in December 2017 and a follow-on batch of five ordered in August 2016.

  1st Batch
  1. ICGS Samarth
  2. ICGS Shoor
  3. ICGS Sarathi

4. ICGS Shaunak
5. ICGS Shaurya
6. ICGS Sujay

Follow-up batch

7. ICGS Sachet
8. ICGS Sujeet
9. ICGS Sajag
10. ICGS Sarthak

Prelims Factoids: Navroz or Nowroz

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Navroz)

What's the NEWS

- The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has extended his greetings on Parsi New Year, Navroz.

Know! all about Navroz

- Parsi New Year, also known as Navroz or Nowroz, is celebrated to mark the beginning of the Iranian calendar.
- In Persian, 'Nav' stands for new, and 'Roz' stands for the day, which literally translates to 'new day'.
- The tradition is believed to have been celebrated for the past 3,000 years, and is observed by **Iranians and the Parsi community** around the world.
- The most prominent Navroz celebrations take place in Maharashtra and Gujarat in India on account of a sizeable Parsi population living there.
- Navroz falls in the month of August, according to the Gregorian calendar. This year it's being celebrated on August 16.
- Navroz is celebrated in March globally, however, in India, the **Shahenshahi calendar** is followed that doesn't account for leap years, hence Navroz arrives 200 days later, in August.
- Navroz is also known as **Jamshed-i-Navroz,** after the Persian King, **Jamshed.**
- The king is credited with having created the Persian calendar, or the Shahenshahi calendar.

Health: CSIR moots 'mega labs' to boost COVID-19 testing

Relevance IN – Prelims (about mega labs + Next Generation Sequencing machines +Next generation sequencing + about genome sequencing)

What's the NEWS

- To speed up testing as well as improve the accuracy of testing for **coronavirus** (**COVID-19**) positive cases, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is working on developing "mega labs" where large machines, called Next Generation Sequencing machines (NGS), which are also used for sequencing human genomes, will be repurposed to sequence 1,500-3,000 viral genomes at a go for detecting the SARS-CoV-2 novel **coronavirus**.

Genome study | A look at how Next Generation Sequencing works

- Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) involves scanning the entire virus genome
- This can help identify more places where the SARS-CoV-2 virus differs from related viruses and can also help develop new diagnostic tests
- Two lineages of the virus, never seen before in Indian genomes, were also found
- The sensitivity (ability to confirm those who have virus as 'positive') of NGS was 97.53%

Know! about these mega labs

- These genome sequencing machines can substantially detect the possible presence of the virus even in several instances where the traditional **RT-PCR** (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) tests miss out on them.
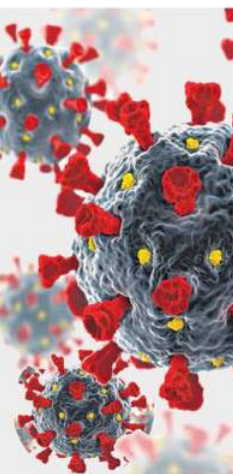
- This is primarily because the RT-PCR test identifies the SARS-CoV-2 virus by exploring only specific sections of the virus whereas the genome method can read a bigger chunk of virus genome
- It can also trace the evolutionary history of the virus and track mutations more reliably.
- The CSIR has partnered with the U.S.-based Illumina, a company that specialises in the manufacture of NGS machines.
- Five such sequencers, costing ₹4 crore each, are currently available in India.
- Establishing "hubs" capable of whole genome sequencing would help track significant mutations in the virus and can be repurposed for any kind of outbreak, be they of viral or bacterial origin.

Know! about Next generation sequencing (NGS)

- **Next generation sequencing** (**NGS**), massively parallel or deep **sequencing** are related terms that describe a DNA **sequencing** technology which has revolutionised genomic research as they generates giga bases of data in a short amount of time
- Using **NGS** an entire human genome can be **sequenced** within a single day.
- This has reduced the cost per genome significantly, making genomic data more accessible to individual researchers.

Know! about Genome sequencing

- **Genome sequencing** is figuring out the order of DNA nucleotides, or bases, in a **genome**—the order of As, Cs, Gs, and Ts that make up an organism's DNA. The human **genome** is made up of over 3 billion of these genetic letters.

Prelims Factoids: Fit India Freedom Run

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Fit India Freedom Run initiative)

What's the NEWS

- A new initiative "Fit India Freedom Run" introduced by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India.
- This event would continue from **15th August to 2nd October 2020.**
- The initiative is being taken up under the aegis of the Fit Indian Movement.

Know! about the initiative

- "Fit India Run" has been conceived keeping in view the indispensable need to keep ourselves fit while maintaining social distancing.
- 'Fit India Freedom Run' was launched by Minister of State for Youth Affairs
- The Fit India Freedom Run has been ideated in a unique way. Participants can **run at their own place** (wherever they are) and at their own pace (at a time convenient to them) between August 15, the 73rd Independence Day and October 2, the 151st Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Know! about Fit India Movement

- It is a nation-wide *movement* in *India* to encourage people to remain healthy and *fit* by including physical activities and sports in their daily lives.
- It was launched by Prime Minister of *India* Narendra Modi at Indira Gandhi Stadium in New Delhi on 29 August 2019 (National Sports Day).

Prelims Factoids: New Building Of National Institute Of Social Defence

Relevance IN – Prelims (about National Institute of Social Defence (NISD)

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment, e-inaugurated the new building of National Institute of Social Defence (NISD)

Know! about NSID

- NISD is the nodal training and research institute in the field of social defence which focuses on **human resource development for drug abuse prevention, welfare of senior citizens and transgenders, beggary prevention, and other social defence issues.**
- It provides inputs for the social defence programmes to the Government of India.
- It also conducts training and research in the field, apart from ensuring the implementation of various programmes under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction and National Action Plan for Senior Citizens.
- NISD's major areas of concern are Substance Abuse Prevention, Care of Older Persons, and Other Social Defence issues including Beggary Prevention, and welfare of Transgenders.
- The institute conducts research on social defence issues, apart from compiling and analysing statistics in the area.
- **NISD has three main divisions**, namely National Centre for Drug Abuse Prevention (NCDAP), Old Age Care Division and Social Defence.
- **NCDAP implements** the activities of National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction through Community-based Peer-Led Intervention & Outreach Drop-In-Centres across states.
- **The Old Age Care Division** runs a series of programmes/certificate courses to develop a cadre of professionals for the care and welfare of older persons.
- **The Social Defence division** trains/sensitizes the Govt./NGOs/Panchayat/Police functionaries and Social Work professionals on social defence issues like beggary prevention and transgender welfare through its national-level one-month programmes and short-term state-level programmes.

Prelims Factoids: Odisha bags 1st position in AMRUT scheme

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation Scheme (AMRUT)

What's the NEWS

- Odisha continued to be the top performer in implementation of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation Scheme (AMRUT) by making significant strides in providing piped water supply to households in urban areas of the State.
- According to the ranking of the states released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Odisha has secured first position by scoring 85.67 per cent.
- Odisha is followed by Chandigarh, Telangana, Gujarat and Karnataka in the implementation of AMRUT.

ATAL MISSION FOR REJUVENATION AND URBAN TRANSFORMATION

#TransformingIndia

LAUNCHED ON JUNE 25, 2015

This Mission seeks to ensure basic infrastructure pertaining to water supply and sewerage connections to all urban households, storm water drains, urban transport with focus on non-motorised transport and public and green spaces in 500 Mission cities, benefitting about 75% of the country's urban population

Know! about AMRUT

- Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation was launched by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi in June 2015 with the focus to establish infrastructure that could ensure adequate robust sewage networks and water supply for urban transformation by implementing urban revival projects.

The purpose of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) is to

- Ensure that every household has access to a tap with the assured supply of water and a sewerage connection.
- Increase the amenity value of cities by developing greenery and well maintained open spaces (e.g. parks) and

ATAL MISSION FOR REJUVENATION AND URBAN TRANSFORMATION

Key Features

- Water Supply
- Pedestrian, non-motorized and public transport facilities, parking spaces
- Sewerage facilities and Septage management
- Creating and upgrading green spaces, parks and recreation centres
- Storm Water drains to reduce flooding

- Reduce pollution by switching to public transport or constructing facilities for non-motorized transport (e.g. walking and cycling).
- All these outcomes are valued by citizens, particularly women, and indicators and standards have been prescribed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in the form of Service Level Benchmarks (SLBs).

Defence: Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO)

What's the NEWS

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched the Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO)

Know! about NIIO

- The NIIO puts in place dedicated structures for the end users to interact with academia and industry towards fostering innovation and indigenisation for self-reliance in defence.
- The NIIO is a three-tiered organisation. Naval Technology Acceleration Council (N-TAC) will bring together the twin aspects of innovation and indigenisation and provide apex level directives.
- A working group under the N-TAC will implement the projects.
- A Technology Development Acceleration Cell (TDAC) has also been created for induction of emerging disruptive technology in an accelerated time frame.
- The Draft Defence Acquisition Policy 2020 (DAP 20) rolled out by the Defence Ministry last month envisaged establishment of Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation by the Service Headquarters.
- Indian Navy already has a functional Directorate of Indigenisation and the new structures created will build upon the ongoing indigenisation initiatives, as well as focus on innovation.
- A compendium of Indian Navy's Indigenisation perspective plans titled 'SWAVLAMBAN' was also released on the occasion.

Prelims Factoids: Dhanwantari Rath

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Dhanwantari Rath and about AYURAKSHA)

What's the NEWS

- A MoU was signed between All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) and Delhi Police for extending the Ayurveda Preventive and Promotive health services in the residential colonies of Delhi Police.
- These services are to be provided through a mobile unit named 'Dhanwantari Rath' and Police Wellness Centres and are to be catered by AIIA, supported by Ministry of AYUSH.

Know! more about the initiative

- **AYURAKSHA a joint venture of AIIA, an autonomous Institute under Ministry of AYUSH and Delhi Police** aims for maintaining the health of frontline COVID warriors like Delhi police personal through Ayurveda immunity boosting measures.

- In continuation of the project, Ayurveda Preventive and Promotive health care are now planned to be extended to the families of Delhi Police personnel.
- Dhanwantari Rath and Police wellness centres would be outreach OPD services of AIIA and aimed to benefit the Families of Delhi Police through Ayurveda Preventive health care services.
- **Dhanwantari Rath –** Mobile unit of Ayurveda health care services would consist a team of Doctors who would be visiting Delhi Police colonies regularly.

Prelims Factoids: Renaming of Manduadih railway station as 'Banaras'

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Ministries involved in approving the name change)

What's the NEWS

- The Union Home Ministry has approved the renaming of Manduadih railway station in Uttar Pradesh as 'Banaras'.

Know! the role of different ministries in giving the approval

- The Uttar Pradesh government had sent a request for renaming the railway station in Varanasi district.
- A 'no objection certificate' has been issued for changing the name of the Manduadih railway station to 'Banaras'
- The **home ministry considers proposals** for name change according to the existing guidelines in consultations with agencies concerned.
- It gives its approval to any proposal for change of name of any place after taking no-objections from the **Ministry of Railways, Department of Posts and Survey of India**
- For changing the name of a village or town or a city, an executive order is needed.
- The renaming of a state requires amendment of the Constitution with a simple majority in Parliament

Miscellaneous: Millennium Alliance Round 6 & COVID19 Innovation Challenge-Awards

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Millennium Alliance)

What's the NEWS

- The Millennium Alliance Round 6 & COVID19 Innovation Challenge-Award Ceremony, which recognized 49 innovative solutions in 5 focus sectors of India
- DST currently supports 150 technology business incubators with over 4000 technology startups within these incubators across the country, bringing in lots of bright ideas and plans to scale up these numbers.
- Millennium Alliance, along with the other partners-- organisations like USAID, FICCI, DFID have been strong partners in that journey

Know! about the award ceremony

- A total of 49 innovative solutions were awarded with a sum totaling Rs 26 crores for their innovations in 5 focus sectors in India namely Education, Health, Clean Energy, Water & Sanitation, Agriculture and sectors having global focus with pilot projects being run in South Asian and African countries like Nepal, Rwanda, Uganda, Bangladesh, Kenya.
- Also, 16 innovators were awarded in the category COVID 19 Innovation Challenge.

Know! about Millennium Alliance

- The Millennium Alliance is an innovation-driven and impact-focused initiative leveraging collaborative resources to identify test and scale Indian innovations that address global development solutions.
- It is a consortium of partners (Public-Private Partnership) including the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID), Facebook and Marico Innovation Foundation.
- The program is currently running in its sixth year and has played a catalytic role in providing funding, capacity building, and business development support to Indian social enterprises.

Miscellaneous: Swachh Survekshan Results 2020

Relevance IN – Prelims (about fifth edition of the annual cleanliness urban survey – key takeaways + about Swachh Survekshan + about Swachh Survekshan 2021 – new additions)

What's the NEWS

- This is the fifth edition of the survey that was introduced by Prime Minister in January 2016.
- In the first edition of the survey, Mysuru had won the award for the cleanest city of India.
- The fifth edition of the annual cleanliness urban survey conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India

5ᵗʰ edition of the annual cleanliness urban survey - key takeaways

- **Indore won the coveted title of the Cleanest City of India, Surat and Navi Mumbai won the second and third position respectively (in the > 1 lakh population category).**
- **Chhattisgarh won the prestigious title of the Cleanest State of India in the > 100 ULB category while Jharkhand was adjudged the Cleanest State of India in the <100 ULB category.**

Know! about the annual cleanliness urban survey - Swachh Survekshan

- MoHUA had conducted Swachh Survekshan 2016 survey for the rating of 73 cities in January 2016, followed by Swachh Survekshan 2017 conducted in January-February 2017 ranking 434 cities.
- **Swachh Survekshan 2018, which became the world's largest cleanliness survey**, ranked 4203 cities followed by SS 2019 which not only covered 4237 cities but was also the first of its kind completely digital survey completed in a record time of 28 days.
- Swachh Survekshan 2020 continued the momentum and surveyed a total of 4242 cities, 62 Cantonment Boards and 97 Ganga Towns and saw an unprecedented participation of 1.87 crore citizens.
- Going a step forward, to ensure sustainability of on-ground performance of cities, the Ministry had also introduced **Swachh Survekshan League** last year, **a quarterly cleanliness assessment** of cities and towns done in three quarters with **25% weightage integrated** into the final Swachh Survekshan results for this year.

Some of the key highlights of Swachh Survekshan 2020 are as follows:

- 1.87 crore citizen feedback received
- 1.7 crore citizens registered on Swachhata App
- Over 11 crore impressions on social media
- Over 5.5 lakh sanitary workers linked to social welfare schemes and over 84,000 informal waste pickers integrated into the mainstream
- Over 4 lakh contractual employees employed by Urban Local Bodies
- Over 21,000 Garbage Vulnerable Points identified and transformed

Swachh Survekshan partner organizations

- The United Nations Agency for International Development (USAID/ India), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Microsoft India, Google,

Know! about Swachh Survekshan 2021.

- MoHUA launched the sixth edition of the survey, Swachh Survekshan 2021.
- The Swachh Survekshan 2021 indicators focus on parameters pertaining to wastewater treatment and reuse along with faecal sludge.
- The crucial issues of legacy of waste management and remediation of landfills have been brought to the fore in the sixth edition of the Survekshan.

Swachh Survekshan 2021 saw the introduction of a new performance category, the Prerak DAUUR Samman which has a total of five additional sub- categories

- **Divya (Platinum), Anupam (Gold), Ujjwal (Silver), Udit (Bronze), Aarohi (Aspiring).**
- In addition to the present criteria of evaluating cities on 'population category', this new category will categorize cities on the basis of six select indicator wise performance criteria.

Role of digital platform

- The launch of the **integrated MIS portal** by the Ministry recently which brings the numerous digital initiatives on a single platform thus ensuring a unified and hassle-free experience for States and cities and leading the way towards the creation of not just a Swachh but a truly digital India.
- Benefits - better monitoring of outcomes along with increased citizen engagement.

Other highlights

- Since its launch in 2014, Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) has made significant progress in the area of both sanitation and solid waste management.
- 4,324 Urban ULBs have been declared ODF, 1,319 cities certified ODF+ and 489 cities certified ODF++ as per MoHUA's sanitation protocols.
- A total of 6 cities (Indore, Ambikapur, Navi Mumbai, Surat, Rajkot and Mysuru) have been rated as 5-star cities, 86 cities as 3-Star and 64 cities as 1-Star, as per MoHUA's Star Rating Protocol for Garbage Free Cities.

Prelims Factoids: Digital Quality of Life Index 2020

Relevance IN – Prelims (about DQL Index 2020 – highlights)

What's the NEWS

- India ranks among the lowest in the world in terms of Internet quality, according to a global research released **by online privacy solutions provider SurfShark.**

Know! about the DQL Index 2020

The DQL Index 2020 is based on the five core pillars that define the digital quality of life:

- internet affordability (mobile and broadband)
- internet quality (mobile and broadband)
- electronic government availability and advancement
- electronic infrastructure development, and
- the state of electronic security.

Digital Quality of Life Index 2020 highlights

- It researches on the quality of a digital wellbeing in 85 countries
- India stands at the overall rank of 57 out of the 85 countries.
- In terms of e-infrastructure, India occupies **79th place**
- India makes it into the top 10 in terms of Internet affordability. **(Rank-9)**
- In terms of Internet Quality India is at the bottom of the pillar (**Rank 78**
- In terms of Electronic Security, it stands at **57**th **Rank**

Its Rank is 15 in terms of e-government

Other highlights

- Seven of the 10 countries with the highest digital quality of life are in Europe, with Denmark leading among 85 countries.
- Canada stands out as a country with the highest digital quality of life in the Americas, while Japan takes the leading position in Asia.

Prelims Factoids: 5th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

Relevance IN – Prelims (about World Conference of Speakers of Parliament + about Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

What's the NEWS

- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla attended the inaugural ceremony of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (5WCSP).

career Launcher IAS

Know! about the conference

- The two day Conference is being organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Geneva and the Parliament of Austria with the support of the United Nations (UN).
- This is the first time that an international Parliamentary Conference of such a magnitude is being organised in Virtual mode.
- The theme of the Conference is Parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that delivers peace and sustainable development for the people and planet.
- The Conference is being held in the backdrop of the current crisis of COVID-19 pandemic is expected to strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation in order to rebuild a better world.

Know! about IPU

- The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is a global **inter-parliamentary institution established in 1889**
- It was the first permanent forum for political multilateral negotiations and to promote parliamentary dialogue world-wide and works for peace
- Initially, the organization was for individual parliamentarians, but now transformed into an international organization of the parliaments of sovereign states.
- The national parliaments of 178 countries are members of the IPU, and 12 regional parliamentary assemblies are associate members.
- The IPU (HQ-Geneva, Switzerland) has permanent observer status at the United Nations General Assembly.

Prelims Factoids: Harit Path
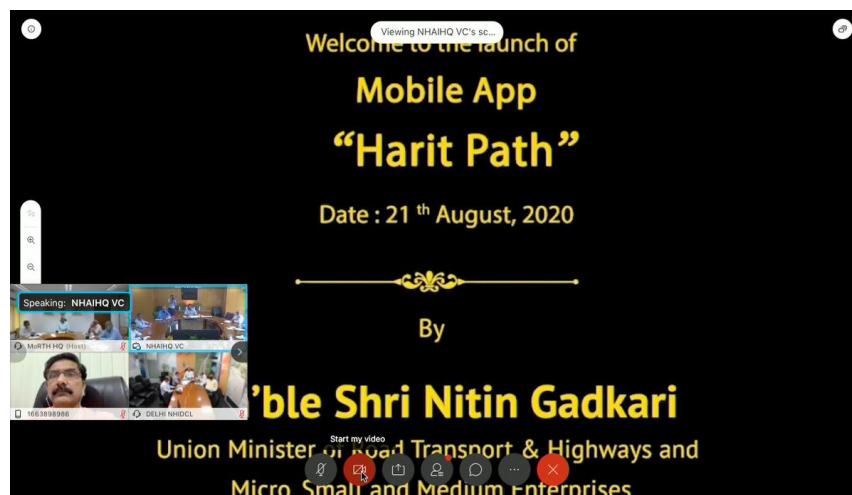
Relevance IN – Prelims (about Harit Bharat Sankalp and Harit Path) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation – this initiative of NHAI can be cited to substantiate the answer)

What's the NEWS

- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, has developed a mobile App called 'Harit Path' **to monitor location, growth, species details, maintenance activities, targets and achievements of each of its field units for each and every plant under all plantation projects.**

Harit Bharat Sankalp and Harit Path

- To commemorate 25 years of its service to the nation, NHAI has recently undertaken '**Harit Bharat Sankalp'**, a nation-wide plantation drive which is in line with its commitment to promote environment protection and sustainability.
- Under this initiative, NHAI planted over 25 lakh plants in 25 days along the stretches of the National Highways between 21st July to 15th August 2020.
- The nation-wide plantation drive has been actively taken up by NHAI's regional offices to achieve the collective target of making greener national highways.

- Maximum number of over 5.0 lakh plants have been planted in Uttar Pradesh, followed by over 3.0 lakh in Rajasthan and 2.67 Lakh in Madhya Pradesh along the national highways.
- In order to track the growth and health of the plants, photographs along with data of the plants captured using Harit Path shall be uploaded every 3 months on NHAI's AI powered Big Data Analytics platform – Data Lake.
- NHAI has identified the NH stretches and is creating a data base of all the plantations already done and to be done on these stretches.
- The launch of 'Harit Path', mobile app will further facilitate creation of Green Highways across the country.

Prelims Factoids: Nuakhai

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Nuakhai festival + about panchayajna)

What's the NEWS

- Nuakhai is a regional public holiday in the Indian **state of Odish**a on the day after the Ganesh Chaturthi festival.
- This is the panchami tithi (fifth day) of the lunar fortnight of the month of **Bhadrapada or Bhadraba.**

Know! about Nuakhai

- This is an agricultural festival of the people of Odisha.
- The festival is observed across the state, but it is particularly important in the life and culture of Western Odisha.
- It is also celebrated in the neighbouring area of Simdega in Jharkhand, where Odia culture is predominant.
- Nuakhai is also called Nuakhai Parab or Nuakhai Bhetghat.
- The word 'nua' means 'new' and khai means food, so this is a harvest festival to celebrate the gathering of the rice crop.
- Nuakhai is thought to date back to **Vedic times,** about 3,000 years ago, when the sages recorded **panchayajna,** the five important activities in the annual calendar of an agrarian society.

These activities are

- sitayajna (the tilling of the land),
- pravapana yajna (the sowing of seeds),
- pralambana yajna (the initial cutting of crops),
- khala yajna (the harvesting of grains) and
- prayayana yajna (the preservation of the produce).

*Nuakhai evolved out of **khala yajna,** which involves cutting the first crop and reverently offering it to the mother goddess.*

Miscellaneous: Population projections for India and States 2011 – 2036

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Technical group on population projections highlights + about National Commission on Population)

What's the NEWS

- India's population is expected to grow by **25%, from 121.1 crores to 151.8 crores during the period 2011-2036** - an increase of 25% in 25 years at the rate of 1.0% annually according to the final report of the technical group on population projections dated July 2020.
- The group was constituted by the National Commission on Population (NCP) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the mandate to provide population **projections for the period 2011 to 2036.**

Technical group on population projections – key highlights

Growth rate

- India's population growth rate is **expected to decline to its lowest** since the Independence in the 2011-2021 decade, with a decadal growth rate of 12.5%.

- It will decline further to 8.4% in the 2021-2031 decade
- India will overtake China as the world's most populous country around 2031 – almost a decade later than the United Nations projection of 2022.

Rural and Urban Population

- The report projects that as much as **70% of this increase will be in urban areas.**
- **So, while 31% of Indians were living in urban India in 2011, that will grow to 39% by 2036.**
- The proportion of the rural population will decline from 69% to 61% as the urban population is projected to increase more than twice the projected increase in the rural population.
- The state of Delhi, which was 98% urban in 2011, will be 100% urban by 2036.
- In addition, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Telangana and Gujarat will all be more than 50% urban
- The states of Himachal Pradesh, Assam and Bihar will continue to be less than 20% urban.
- The most dramatic population shift from rural to urban will happen in Kerala, where 92% of the population will be living in urban areas

Migration

- The **Cohort component model**, which has been used by the technical group for the projections, has used **fertility, mortality and migratio**n.
- **The rate of migration to and from states to be constant for the projection period.**
- In that period, **Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were the major net out-migration states** while Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana and Delhi had positive in-migration.
- The net out-migration effect is offset **by higher fertility rates and large base populations** in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- These two states will account for 34% of the increase in population in the country between 2011 and 2036.
- Uttar Pradesh,will see an increase of almost 30% in 2036
- Bihar will witness an increase by 42% in 2036.
- 54% of the growth in population in India between 2011 and 2036 will take place in the five states of UP, Bihar, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh.
- The five southern states of Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu will account for only 9% of the growth.

Declining fertility rates

- **UP and Bihar** are also the two states with the **highest total fertility rates** (TFRs) (average number of children born to each woman) in 2011 with 3.5 and 3.7 respectively.
- This was significantly greater than India's overall TFR, which was 2.5.
- States like Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh had TFRs below 2.
- **In the 2011-2036 period, the TFR in India will decline to 1.73**
- According to the report, the only Indian state with a TFR higher than 2 by 2035 will be Bihar at 2.38.
- In India, life expectancy at birth is expected to increase from 66 for men and 69 for women in 2011 to 71 and 74 respectively.
- Kerala is once again likely to be the outperformer here and could become the only Indian state with a life expectancy above 80 for women by 2036 and 74 for men.

Sex Ratio

- The population in 2036 is expected to be **more feminine** compared to the population as of 2011 when it came to sex ratio.
- The country's sex ratio of the total population (females per 1000 males) is expected to increase from 943 in 2011 to **957 during 2036.**
- In 2036 sex ratio in eighteen states, except Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat will increase as compared to 2011
- The lowest sex ratio of 899 is expected to be in NCT of Delhi in 2036, followed by 900 and 908 in Gujarat and Haryana respectively.

Infant mortality rate (IMR)

- The report said that the infant mortality rate (IMR) of the country, which is reported to be 46 in 2010 is **expected to go down** to 30 by the end of the period 2031-35.
- The IMR, which was highest in Madhya Pradesh at 58 followed by 57 in Uttar Pradesh in 2011-15 is expected to come down to 37 in Madhya Pradesh, followed by Uttar Pradesh (38) in 2031-35
- The lowest IMR is expected to be in Kerala at 9 in 2031-35.

Youth Population

- The youth population in the age- group 15-24 years is **expected to increase from 23.3 crores in 2011 to 25.2 crores in 2021** and then continue to decrease to 22.7 crores in 2036

National Population Commission

- The **National Commission on Population** (**NCP**) was constituted in May 2000, to fulfil the objectives of the **National Population** Policy 2000.
- The objectives of this **commission** are to review, monitor and give directions for the implementation of the **National Population** Policy (NPP) 2000.
- **It is chaired by the prime minister** with the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission (now NITI Aayog) as vice chairman.
- Chief ministers of all states, ministers of the related central ministries, secretaries of the concerned departments, eminent physicians, demographers and the representatives of the civil society are members of the commission.
- Presently this Commission is functioning under Ministry of Health.

Prelims Factoids: Aarogya Setu introduces Open API Service

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Open API Service + functions and benefits of Aarogya setu app)

What's the NEWS

- Aarogya Setu team has worked on a new innovative feature which is called 'Open API Service'.
- In order **to help businesses and economy to start functioning while being safe,** the Open API Service enables organizations to check the status of Aarogya Setu and integrate it into its various Work from Home features.
- The Open API Service of Aarogya Setu, addresses the fear/risk of Covid-19 infections and help the people, businesses and the economy to return to normalcy.

Open API Service

- The Open API Service of Aarogya Setu, can be availed by **organizations and business entities,** who are registered in India with more than 50 employees, and they can use the Open API Service to query the Aarogya Setu Application in real-time and get the health status of their employees or any other Aarogya Setu User, who have provided their consent for sharing their health status with the organization.

Aarogya Setu Introduces 'Open API Service'
A Novel Feature To Help Businesses Return To Normalcy

The service will enable organizations to get real-time health status of their employees (with User's consent) without violating any data privacy

It can be availed by business entities, registered in India with more than 50 employees

Registration for Open API Service can be done at https://openapi.aarogyasetu.gov.in

Aarogya Setu
Open API Service

Dated: 22 august, 2020

- The Open API shall only provide the Aarogya Setu status and name of the Aarogya Setu User (with User's consent). No other personal data shall be provided through the API.

Know! the features of Aarogya Setu

- Aarogya Setu has now emerged as the most downloaded contact tracing App in the world, with more than 15 crore Users.
- Thus Aarogya Setu based Bluetooth contact tracing and testing is very efficient and effective.

- **The Aarogya Setu ITIHAS interface** which uses location data and Aarogya Setu analytics to predict emerging hotspots at Sub Pincode levels
- More than 30,000 hotspots have been identified at a very granular level of 300 m X 300 m and shared with State Governments and Districts.
- Aarogya Setu has continuously innovated and introduced more novel features like e-pass integration, QR Code scanning, sharing of Health status with family/known persons

Defence: Launch of IAF Mobile Application 'MY IAF'

Relevance IN – Prelims (about MY IAF mobile app)

What's the NEWS

- The Indian Air Force has launched a mobile application '**MY IAF'** as a part of Digital India initiative.
- The application developed in association with Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) **provides career related information and details** for those desirous of joining the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- The user friendly format of the app serves as a single digital platform interfacing the users with the details of selection procedure, training curriculum, pay and perks etc for both officers and airmen in the IAF.

Prelims Factoids: The Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration

PM Awards for Excellence in Public Administration

Priority Programmes
- Prime Minister Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)
- e-National Agriculture Market (eNAM)
- Startup India
- Standup India
- Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY)
- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

Innovations
- Environment Conservation
- Disaster Management
- Water Conservation
- Energy
- Education
- Health, etc.

सत्यमेव जयते

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration) + Mains (GS II Governance)

What's the NEWS

- Over 700 districts have participated in the prime minister's awards for excellence in public administration which will be conferred on October 31 at the Statue of Unity in Gujarat

Know! about the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration

- Government of India has instituted a scheme in 2006 namely, "The Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration" - to acknowledge, recognize and reward the extraordinary and innovative work done by Districts/ Organizations of the Central and State Governments.
- The Scheme was restructured in 2014 for recognizing the performance of District Collectors in **Priority Programs, Innovations and Aspirational Districts.**
- The Scheme has been restructured again in 2020, to recognize the performance of District Collectors towards **economic development of the District.**
- It shall be conferred by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on Rashtriya Ekta Diwas - October 31, 2020 at the Statue of Unity, Kevadia, Gujarat.

For the year 2020, has been comprehensively restructured to recognize the contribution of civil servants in strengthening of:

- Inclusive Development through Credit Flow to the Priority Sector
- Promoting people's movements – "Jan Bhagidari" through Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban and Gramin) in the District.
- Improving Service Delivery and Redressal of Public Grievances

Social Issues: Status of Sex Ratio at Birth in India

Relevance IN – Prelims (about IAPPD)

What's the NEWS

- The Vice President recently released a report- '**Status of Sex Ratio at Birth in India'** which mentioned that there has not been any change in the sex ratio at birth in India from **2001-2017--the number of girl children born is much less than what is the general or natural norm.**
- It was brought out by the **Indian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development (IAPPD).**

Know! about IAPPD

- The Indian Association of Parliamentariants on Population and Development (IAPPD) is a national level Organization established in the year 1978.
- The organization was formed with an imperative of moderating the pace of population growth for a smoother course of development so as to ensure an overall improvement in the quality of life of the people and maintain a proper balance between population and development.
- Board of Trustees comprising the Chairman, Executive Secretary, Treasurer and Members look after the smooth running and functioning of the IAPPD.
- The IAPPD has also a Standing Committee consisting of 37 Members of Parliament (MPs), Ex. MPs and Legislators belonging to different political parties of India.

IAPPD is an affiliated body of the following fora and associations:

- The Global Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, New York, USA. The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, AFPPD Bangkok, Tailand.
- The Asian Population and Development Association, APDA Tokyo, Japan.
- International Medical Parliamentarians Organization (IMPO).

Prelims Factoids: India's longest river ropeway inaugurated in Guwahati

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the ropeway)

What's the NEWS

- India's longest passenger ropeway over the Brahmaputra river was formally inaugurated in Assam's Guwahati city.

Know! more about it

- The 1.82 km bi-cable ropeway connects Guwahati and North Guwahati and has been constructed at a cost of Rs 56 crore.
- The ropeway will operate from Kachari Ghat in Panbazar up to the Dol Govinda temple in North Guwahati
- The ropeway ride will facilitate the passengers to look out for the **Urvashi island and catch a glimpse of the Umananda temple** which was built by **Ahom King Gadadhar Singha.**

Defence: INS Viraat to be dismantled at Alang in Gujarat

Relevance IN – Prelims (about INS Viraat + about Alang)

What's the NEWS

- INS Viraat, the aircraft carrier that served the Indian Navy for 30 years before being decommissioned three years ago, is likely to be towed from Mumbai to Alang in Gujarat's Bhavnagar district next month to be dismantled and sold as scrap
- It will likely be towed from the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai to ship breaking yard at Alang
- It will take around three days for the ship to be towed from Mumbai to Alang.
- It will be scrapped at the **country's first certified eco-friendly ship recycling yard** in nine to 12 months

Know! about INS Viraat

- INS Viraat, the second Centaur-class aircraft carrier, was in service for 30 years before being decommissioned in March 2017.
- It is the longest serving warship (30 years), inducted into the Indian Navy in 1987
- The aircraft carrier, in its earlier avatar, had won the Falklands War against Argentina in 1982 for the Royal British Navy.
- It weighs about 27,800 tonnes and served in the British Navy as HMS Hermes from November 1959 to April 1984 and after refurbishment, was commissioned into the Indian Navy.
- In late 80s, the Indian Navy purchased it at a cost of $65 million and it was re-commissioned on May 12, 1987.
- INS Viraat is the second aircraft carrier to be broken down in India.
- In 2014, INS Vikrant was dismantled in Mumbai.

Culture: Ministry of Culture announces 7 new circles of Archaeological Survey of India

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the new circles of ASI)

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Culture has announced 7 new circles of Archaeological Survey of India.
- The Ministry of Culture has taken this step to facilitate and strengthen the process of **preservation and registration of archaeological monuments** along with registration of artefacts with self declaration.
- The new circles have been created in Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal and Gujarat.
- Trichy, Raiganj, Rajkot, Jabalpur, Jhansi & Meerut have been announced as new circles.
- Earlier there were 29 ASI circles across the country.

Know! about these new Circles

- A large state like Tamil Nadu which has thousands of temples and glorious memories of the Chola kings,**Trichy has been made a new circle** along with the circle of Chennai.
- Karnataka is an important state in terms of holiness. Hampi city in Karnataka is a place of international importance from the point of view of archaeological heritage therefore the **Hampi Sub-Circle now has been made a new full fledged circle.**
- In West Bengal, **Raiganj has been made a new circle** along with Kolkata,
- In Gujarat, **Rajkot has been announced a new circle** along with Vadodara.

- **Jabalpur has been announced a new circle** along with Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. This will include the monuments from Jabalpur, Rewa, Shahdol and Sagar divisions.
- **Jhansi in Bundelkhand and Meerut in western Uttar Pradesh have been announced two new circles** along with Lucknow and Agra in Uttar Pradesh.

Prelims Factoids: Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

पुलिस अनुसंधान एवं विकास ब्यूरो, गृह मंत्रालय
Bureau of Police Research and Development
Ministry of Home Affairs

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Bureau of Police Research and Development)

What's the NEWS
- The Bureau of Police Research and Development is celebrating its Golden Jubilee Anniversary on 28th August, 2020.

Know! about BPR&D
- The Bureau of Police Research and Development was raised on 28th August, 1970, through a **resolution of Ministry of Home Affairs,** Government of India, with a mandate to promote excellence in policing, promote speedy and systematic study of police problems, apply science and technology in the method and techniques by the Police.
  The Bureau was initially started with two Divisions
  1. Research, Publication & Statistics Division and
  2. Development Division.
- In 1973, the **Training Division** was added, on the recommendation of the **Gore Committee** on Police training.
- The forensic science services comprising CFSLs & GEsQD under the Development Division grew over a period and a **separate Directorate of Forensic Sciences** under the BPR&D came into existence in 1983.
- In 1995, **Correctional Division** was started to study the issues of Prisons and Prison Reforms.
- In 2008, the **National Police Mission** was added and Development Division was restructured as Modernization Division.
- Over the years, the BPR&D has transformed through several additions of responsibilities into the present role.

Prelims Factoids: Great Andamanese tribe

Relevance IN – Prelims (about PVTGs and different tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands)

What's the NEWS
- At least five members of the **Great Andamanese tribe** have tested positive for Covid-19
- Earlier this month, it was reported that five welfare staff working with the Jarawa tribe had tested positive for Covid-19.
- **Survival International** said concern was growing for the safety of other tribes on the islands, including the Jarawa and the uncontacted Sentinelese.

Know! more about these tribes

Great Andamanese
- The Great Andamanese are a small group of just over 50 survivors, down from more than 5000 when the British colonised the islands in the 1850s.
- They are classified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).
- They speak Jeru dialect among themselves

Jarawa

- The Jarawa are a nomadic hunter-gatherer tribe, who have only had friendly contact with settlers neighbouring their territory since 1998.
- They live in parts of South Andaman and Middle Andaman Islands, and their present numbers are estimated at between 250–400 individuals.

Sentinelese

- The uncontacted Sentinelese-- the most isolated tribe in the world-- are extremely vulnerable to diseases from outsiders

*The five PVTGS residing in Andamans are **Great Andamanese, Jarwas, Onges, Shompens and North Sentinelese.***

Protection Needed

Six tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands – the Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompens – have been notified as Scheduled Tribes

All except the Nicobarese are recognised as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups

The commission feels the videos outrage the modesty of the Jarawas without their knowledge

It has ordered the videos be taken off and no such content be posted online in future

The Jarawas are **480** in number at present and inhabit the Middle and South Andaman Islands

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has taken a strong exception to videos posted on YouTube and other social media platforms

Know! about PVTGs

- 75 tribal groups have been categorized by **Ministry of Home Affairs** as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG)s.
- PVTGs reside in 18 States and UT of A&N Islands.
- **The Ministry of Tribal Affairs implements the Scheme** of "Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)" exclusively for them.
- Under the scheme, Conservation-cum-Development (CCD)/Annual Plans are to be prepared by each State/UT for their PVTGs based on their need assessment, which are then appraised and approved by the Project Appraisal Committee of the Ministry.

Criteria for identification of PVTGs

- Pre-agricultural level of technology
- Low level of literacy
- Economic backwardness and
- declining or stagnant population.

Know! more about PVTGs

- In 1973, the **Dhebar Commission** created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.
- In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- In India, tribal population makes up for 8.6% of the total population. Tribal people live in about 15% of the geographical area of the country.
- The PVTG of Sahariyas has the highest population of 4,50,217, while the PVTGs of Sentinelets and Andamanese has a very small population of 39 and 43, respectively.

Survival International

- Survival International is a human rights organisation formed in 1969 that campaigns for the rights of indigenous and/or tribal peoples and uncontacted peoples.
- The organisation's campaigns generally focus on tribal peoples' desires to keep their ancestral lands.

Prelims Factoids: India's First Toy Manufacturing Cluster - Koppala

Relevance IN – Prelims (about India's First Toy Manufacturing Cluster – Koppala)

What's the NEWS

- India's "First Toy Manufacturing Cluster" To Come Up At Koppal, Karnataka

Know! more about it

- "In Line With The Vision Of Vocalforlocal And Boosting Toy Manufacturing, Koppala Will Have **India's First Toy Manufacturing Cluster.**
- With The Eco-System To Support Toy Cluster In Place, This 400 Acres SEZ Will Have Top-Class Infra And Generate 40,000 Jobs In 5 Years
- The Karnataka Government Is **Inviting Global Toy Makers To The "First Of Its Kind" Toy Manufacturing Cluster In India At Koppala** And Had Recently Held A Webinar Cum Panel Discussion With A Panel Of Leading Toys Manufacturers.

Steps taken by Karnataka to achieve the tag of leading toy making state

- Karnataka is poised to emerge as a **leading toy-making cluster** in the country due to the robust ecosystem the state has created to support toy making industries

  The state has supported and nurtured the setting up of
  - ➢ Tool Manufacturing & precision engineering (TMTP)
  - ➢ polymers manufacturing clusters
  - ➢ robust design capacity and testing certification agencies
  - ➢ GTTC (Government Tool Room and Training Centre).

- The state has also amended industrial, land and labour laws to make it easier for industries to consider Karnataka for its investments.
- The **proposed park in Koppala** is an attempt to bring in some employment to a region that is one of the most backward in the country.
- Karnataka is the **third-largest market for toys** in India with around $159 million, or 9.1%, of the national market
- The state's toy industry has grown at an average of 18% from 2010-17, and is expected to reach $310 million by 2023.

GENERAL STUDIES I

Indian Heritage and Culture, History and Geography of the World and Society

Indian Culture and Heritage: Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Relevance IN – Prelims and GS I (about Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak)

What's the NEWS

- Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah inaugurated a two-day international webinar on the theme of **'Lokmanya Tilak - Swaraj to Self-reliant India'** organized by the **Indian Council for Cultural Relations** on the **100th death anniversary** of the great freedom fighter Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak

- Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak played a key role in the making of the Indian Independence movement complete in letter and spirit.

- The slogan of 'Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it' given by Lokmanya Tilak, will always be written in golden letters in the history of the Indian Independence Movement.

Know! all about Tilak

- Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856- 1920) a scholar, mathematician, philosopher, and an ardent nationalist who helped lay the foundation for India's independence by building his own defiance of British rule into a national movement.

- He founded (1914) and served as president of the **Indian Home Rule League.**

- In 1916 he concluded the **Lucknow Pact with Mohammed Ali Jinnah**, which provided for Hindu-Muslim unity in the nationalist struggle.

- He developed the **Deccan Education Society (1884),** which aimed at educating the masses, especially in the English language

- He considered **English language to be a powerful force** for the dissemination of liberal and democratic ideals.

- He owned and edited two weekly newspapers : **Kesari ("The Lion"), published in Marathi, and The Mahratta, published in English**.

- He organized two important festivals, **Ganesh in 1893 and Shivaji** in 1895.

- The British government, prosecuted him for sedition and sent him to jail in 1897.

- The trial and sentence earned him the **title Lokamanya** ("Beloved Leader of the People").

- Tilak aimed at swarajya (independence), not piecemeal reforms, and attempted to persuade the Congress Party to adopt his militant program.

- On that issue, he clashed with the moderates during the party's session (meeting) at Surat in 1907, and the party split.

- The government again prosecuted Tilak on a charge of sedition and inciting terrorism and deported him to Mandalay, Burma (Myanmar), to serve a six-year prison sentence.

- In the Mandalay jail, Tilak settled down to write his magnum opus, the **r mad Bhagavadgit Rahasya ("Secret of the Bhagavadgita")—**also known as Bhagavad Gita or Gita Rahasya—an original exposition of the most-sacred book of the Hindus.

- Earlier, in 1893, he had published The Orion; or, Researches into the Antiquity of the Vedas, and, a decade later, The Arctic Home in the Vedas.

- On his release in 1914, on the eve of World War I, Tilak once more plunged into politics. **He launched the Home Rule League with the rousing slogan "Swarajya is my birthright and I will have it."** (Activist Annie Besant also established an organization with the same name at about that time.)

- In 1916 he rejoined the Congress Party and signed the historic Lucknow Pact, a Hindu-Muslim accord, with Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the future founder of Pakistan.

Know! about ICCR

- **The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) was founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, independent India's first Education Minister.**

- It is **an autonomous organisation** of the Government of India, involved in India's external cultural relations, through cultural exchange with other countries and their peoples.

- Its objectives are to actively participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes

pertaining to India's external cultural relations; to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries; to promote cultural exchanges with other countries and people, and to develop relations with nations.

- The Council addresses its mandate of cultural diplomacy through a broad range of activities.
- It also administers the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding, established by the Government of India in 1965, whose last award was in 2009.

Culture: The Great Maestro Abanindranath Tagore

Relevance IN -Prelims (about Abanindranath Tagore) + Mains GS I (Indian heritage and culture)

What's the NEWS

- National Galary of Modern Art, New Delhi organised the virtual tour titled "The Great Maestro | Abanindranath Tagore" to commemorate the **150th Birth Anniversary of Abanindranath Tagore** on 7th August 2020.
- The NGMA takes pride in 99 works of art created by the iconic artist which are a part of prestigious collection.
- This virtual tour presents the 77 works of art from the prominent artworks of Abanindranath Tagore from reserve collection of NGMA, grouped in a series of four different themes of (i) Portraits and Characters, (ii) Tradition with Sensibility, (iii) Individual Style, (iv) Landscape of Interiority.

Know! all about Abanindranath Tagore

- Abanindranath Tagore,, the nephew of Rabindranath Tagore, was one of the most prominent artists of India.
- He was the first major supporter of swadeshi values in Indian art.
- Abanindranath first created the '**Indian Society of Oriental Art'** and later went on to establish **Bengal school of art.**
- His sole aim for establishing the school was to counter the English influence on Indian artists.
- He did that by incorporating Indian elements in his works and achieved success when British art institutions gave in and accepted to teach and propagate his style of works in their organizations.
- His idea of modernizing Mughal and Rajput paintings eventually gave rise to modern Indian painting, which took birth at his Bengal school of art.
- Abanindranath is also regarded as a proficient and accomplished writer.
- Most of his literary works were meant for children.
- Some of his books like '**BudoAngla', 'KhirerPutul' and 'Rajkahini'** are best examples of Bengali children's literature.
- Abanindranath Tagore is a singular figure in modern Indian art.
- Abanindranath painted a range of subjects.
- He had a leaning towards painting images with historic or literary allusions.
- He liked to paint sets of images dealing with a theme or a text such as the **'Arabian Nights' or the 'Krishna Leela'.**
- Top of Form

GENERAL STUDIES II

Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations

Government Schemes: Gramodyog Vikas Yojana

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Gramodyog Vikas Yojana) + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

What's the NEWS

- Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India, approved a programme for the benefit of artisans involved in manufacturing of Agarbatti and to develop village industry under 'Gramodyog Vikas Yojana'

Know! about Gramodyog Vikas Yojana

- As per the programme, initially four Pilot Projects will be started, including one in North Eastern part of the country.

- **The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), a statutory organisation under the Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), will provide training, and assist artisans working in this area, with Agarbatti manufacturing machines.**

- Under this Mission, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), one of the statutory organizations, working under the M/o MSME,will provide training, and assist artisans working in this area

- The Centre earlier took two major decisions by placing the agarbatti item from "free" trade to 'restricted' trade in the import policy and enhancing the import duty from 10 per cent to 25 per cent on 'round bamboo sticks' used for manufacturing of agarbatti for the benefit of the domestic industry.

Connect to the Past (Feb 2019) -developments related to it

Cabinet approves continuation of KhadiGramodyogVikas Yojana from 2017-18 to 2019-20

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, has approved the approval to the following:

- To continue the existing schemes of MPDA, Khadi Grant, ISEC and Village Industry Grant, **all subsumed under 'Khadi and Gramodyog Vikas Yojana'**

- To bring in a new component of **'Rozgar Yukt Gaon'** to introduce enterprise-based operation in the Khadi sector and to create employment opportunities for thousands of new artisans

Know! about Rozgar Yukta Gaon (RYG)

- It aims at introducing an 'Enterprise-led Business Model' in place of 'Subsidy-led model' through partnership among 3 stakeholders- KRDP-assisted Khadi Institution, Artisans and Business Partner.

- It will be rolled out in 50 Villages by providing 10,000 Charkhas, 2000 looms & 100 warping units to Khadi artisans, and would create direct employment for 250 Artisans per village.

8 different schemes of Khadi & Village Industries are now merged under 2 umbrella heads i.e.

- Khadi Vikas Yojana and Gramodyog Vikas Yojana

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career Launcher IAS

- Khadi Vikas Yojana [*Market Promotion & Development Assistance (MPDA), Interest Subsidy Eligibility Certificate (ISEC),.Workshed, Strengthening Weak Infra, Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana, Khadi Grant*
- Gramodyog Vikas Yojanaa [Village Industries Grant].

Know! about Market Promotion and Development Assistance Scheme (MPDA)

- MPDA was launched as a unified scheme by merging different schemes implemented by the Khadi sector including publicity, marketing, market promotion, and marketing development assistance.
- Grant/subsidy was also provided for construction of Khadi plazas. The overall objective of the scheme is to ensure increased earnings for artisans.

Know! about Interest Subsidy Eligibility Certificate Scheme

- It was launched in May 1977 to help Khadi and Poly vastra producing institutions in mobilizing the capital funds from banking institutions.
- Under the Scheme, implementing agencies can avail of bank loan as per the ISEC issued by the KVIC on payment of only 4 percent of interest and difference between the actual interest charged by the bank and 4 percent is borne by KVIC as interest subsidy.

Prelims Factoids: Digital platforms to market residential properties launched

DIGITAL MARKETING FOR REAL ESTATE

Relevance IN – Prelims (about 'CREDAI Awaas App' and NAREDCO's online portal 'HousingforAll.com') + Mains (GS II e-Governance, transparency and accountability

What's the NEWS

- Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep launched digital platforms of **real estate bodies CREDAI and NAREDCO** to market residential properties, and also released a guide book for an affordable rental housing scheme for migrants.

Know! more about the app/portal and ARHC programme

- The minister launched **'CREDAI Awaas App' and NAREDCO's online portal 'HousingforAll.com'**
- The Ministry also released the knowledge pack of the government's **'Affordable Rental Housing Complexes' (ARHCs) programme**, which has been recently launched to provide rental accommodations to migrant and urban poor.
- The ARHCs scheme, which has been launched under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U) as part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, will help in providing dignified and affordable living spaces for urban migrants/ poor in need
- The ARHCs scheme would also help real estate developers in retaining labour force on their sites
- The two new e-commerce platforms by CREDAI and Naredco have the potential to become Amazon of real estate.
- CREDAI Awaas App is a residential project discovery online platform through which buyers will be able to virtually explore and experience the projects from 220 cities across the country.
- The app aims to facilitate transparent home buying in India of RERA approved projects by CREDAI developers.

Know! about CREDAI

- **CREDAI** is a **not-for-profit company** registered under Section 25 of Companies Act, 1956, seeks to create a favourable policy climate to ensure housing for all.
- Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) established in 1999 is the apex **body of private real estate developers**
- CREDAI strives to make the Real Estate industry more organized and progressive by working closely with all stakeholders: government representatives, policy makers, investors, finance companies, consumers, and real estate professionals.
- CREDAI a recognized partner for the government and is represented on several committees working at policy formulations and various committees of the Government

Know! about NAREDCO

- National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) was established as an **autonomous self-regulatory body** in 1998 under the aegis of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Govt. of India.
- NAREDCO, is the apex national body for the real estate industry and it is visualized as a single platform where Government, industry and public would discuss various problems and opportunities face to face which would result in speedy resolution of issues.
- It was formed with the mandate to induce transparency and ethics in real estate business and transform the unorganized Indian real estate sector into a matured and globally competitive business sector.
- NAREDCO works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the growth of real estate industry in India, partnering industry and government alike through advisory and consultative processes.

Human Resource Development: Grand Finale of the largest ever online hackathon in the world

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Smart India Hackathon (Software) - 2020) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.)

What's the NEWS

- The grand finale of the **4th edition of Smart India Hackathon (Software) - 2020** virtually inaugurated virtually by the HRD Ministry
- The Hackathon has been organized by the Ministry of HRD, Government of India; All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Persistent Systems and i4c.

Know! more about the Virtual Hackathon 2020

- This Hackathon is the World's biggest open innovation model involving more than 4.5 lakh students, 2000+ educational institutions, 1000+ mentors, 1500+ evaluators, 70+ problem submitting agencies including central ministries, state govt departments, and private industries thereby having true PPP model.
- More than 10,000 participants competing to solve 243 problem statements from 37 central government departments, 13 state governments and 20 industries.

Know! about SIH

- Smart India Hackathon (SIH) is a nationwide initiative that provides students a platform to solve some of the pressing problems we face in our daily lives, and thus inculcates a culture of product innovation and a mindset of problem solving.
- Smart India Hackathon is conducted every year since 2017 in two formats i.e. **SIH Software and SIH Hardware Editions**.
- Smart India Hackathon used to be conducted at various nodal centers each year, where student participants, industry representative and mentors used to congregate physically at the assigned nodal centers to provide a solution on the selected problems.

- The SIH Software Edition is being conducted in ONLINE mode.
- Student participants, SIH coordinators and industry evaluators are coming together on a digital platform designed to facilitate the implementation of the event seamlessly, managed centrally by MHRD's Innovation Cell & All India Council

Other related info

- Another prominent Drug Discovery Hackathon is on way to discover new drugs to help fight such pandemics.
- After the great success of Smart India Hackathon, two prominent International Hackathons i.e. **India- Portugal Hackathon and India- ASEAN Hackathon** are going to take place
- During the lock down period students participated in **"Ideathon" and "Samadhan" virtual Hackathons** that laid the foundation of organizing this year's SIH software edition

Health and Family Welfare: Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about eVIN) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

What's the NEWS

- The Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN) is an innovative technological solution aimed at **strengthening immunization supply chain systems across the country.**
- This is being **implemented under National Health Mission (NHM)** by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- eVIN aims to provide **real-time information on vaccine stocks and flows, and storage temperatures** across all cold chain points in the country.
- This robust system has been used with the requisite customization during the COVID pandemic for ensuring continuation of the essential immunization services and protecting our children and pregnant mothers against vaccine preventable diseases.

Know! about eVIN

- eVIN combines state-of-the-art technology, a strong IT infrastructure and trained human resource to enable real time monitoring of stock and storage temperature of the vaccines kept in multiple locations across the country.
- **eVIN has reached 32 States and Union Territories (UTs)** and will soon be rolled-out in the remaining States and UTs
- At present, 23,507 cold chain points across 585 districts of 22 States and 2 UTs routinely use the eVIN technology for efficient vaccine logistics management.
- The Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network has helped create a big data architecture that generates actionable analytics encouraging data-driven decision-making and consumption based planning that helps in maintaining optimum stocks of vaccines leading to cost savings.
- This strong platform has the potential to be leveraged for any new vaccine including COVID-19 vaccine, as and when available.

Agriculture: Sahakar Cooptube NCDC Channel

Relevance IN – Prelims (about 'Sahakar Cooptube NCDC India' and objective behind it) + Mains (GS II Social issues – role of cooperative in improving the condition of farmers

What's the NEWS

- The Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare launched the **National Cooperative Development Corporation's** YouTube channel, 'Sahakar Cooptube NCDC India', to encourage farmers and the youth to take benefit of cooperatives.

- The Ministry also released videos **on formation and registration of cooperatives** for 18 states in Hindi and regional languages. The videos will be aired on the new channel.

Know! more about it

- Cooperatives are part of our culture. Through this channel, our effort should be to facilitate **involvement of the youth in the cooperative movement**

- Formation of new cooperatives is a prerequisite for bringing new life and dedication in the realm of the cooperative movement

- The guidance videos in different languages covering 18 states would also strengthen and deepen the major initiatives of our government to promote and form 10,000 farmer-producer organisations (FPOs)

Know! the role of NCDC and importance of cooperatives

- NCDC as an apex-level statutory institution under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has achieved tremendous success with a cumulative financial assistance to cooperatives to the tune of Rs 1,54,000 crore.

- Cooperatives in India have come a long way and have proven their success in **improving the condition of farmers and economic development.**

- Largely as associations of small and marginal farmers and the rural poor, the cooperatives have acquired a huge network of over 8.50 lakh organisations and 290 million members.

- Cooperatives lend support to farmers in minimising risks in the agriculture and allied sector and act as a shield against exploitation.

NITI Aayog: ATL Tinkering Marathon 2019

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ATL Tinkering Marathon 2019 + Atal Tinkering Lab) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

What's the NEWS

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog declared the results of its flagship national annual innovation Marathon challenge ATL Tinkering Marathon 2019 held over 5000+ Atal Tinkering Labs across the country and announced 150 winners of the Marathon.

Know! about ATL Tinkering Marathon 2019

- This year, the challenge was executed by AIM in partnership with MyGOV on MyGov's Innovate Platform.

- With the central theme as "**Research, Ideate, Innovate, Implement – Mindful Innovation for the greater good**", this year's marathon was uniquely **designed by the students themselves.**

- Four different problem areas were shortlisted on the basis of Phase I and Phase II - Enabling a Sustainable Environment and Justice, Enabling Outcome Driven Quality Education, Enhancing Health and Hygiene, Ensuring Inclusivity and Equality.
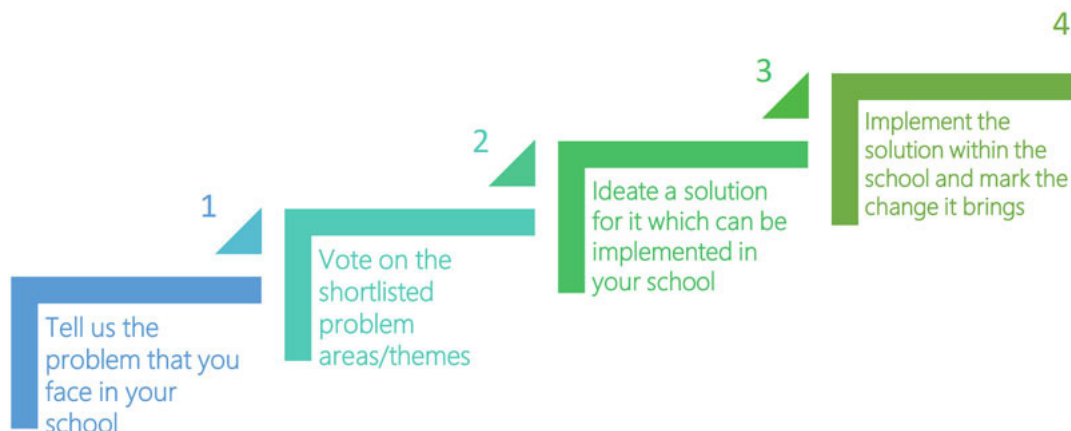
- The students identified community problems of their choice in one or more of the above four problem areas and developed innovative solutions in the form of working prototypes or minimum viable product (MVP).
- Phase-I included crowdsourcing of the problems faced by students in the communities surrounding them. It saw over 4300 entries. Phase-II included voting on the shortlisted problem statements.
- The Marathon had a strong focus on Research preceding the Innovations.
- The final phase of solution development received over 1191 entries from students across 29 States and UTs.

Additional info

Atal Tinkering Lab

- In ATLs, students of class 6th to 12th acquire a problem-solving attitude, develop innovative solutions leveraging technologies like 3D printers, robotics, miniaturised electronics, IOT and programming and DIY kits, with support from teachers and mentors.

Atal Innovative Mission

- AIM is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.
- AIM's objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of the country.

Information Technology: Goa joins MyGov Citizen Engagement Platform

Relevance IN – Prelims (MyGov portal and its objective) + Mains (GS II transparency and accountability + e governance

What's the NEWS

- Goa, launched the MyGov Goa portal, on 4th August 2020
- Goa joins the MyGov Citizen Engagement Platform for enabling participative governance.

Know! all about MyGov Goa portal

- MyGov Goa portal will go a long way in strengthening public participation in the governance process and allow the state to connect to nationwide audience allowing citizens to participate in different forums and give their view/inputs on government policies/schemes

- MyGov (mygov.in), the Government of India's citizen engagement and crowdsourcing platform, aims to promote active citizen participation in governance and policymaking.

- Since its launch on 26th July 2014, MyGov has adopted multiple engagement methodologies like discussions, tasks, innovation challenges etc

- MyGov user base has expanded to more than 1.25 Crores and millions of citizens engage with MyGov on its social media platforms

- In order to engage with citizens at the State level, MyGov has enabled state instances to crowdsource ideas and creative content for state specific initiatives in a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) mode.

- 12 states had already launched their MyGov platforms State Instance

- With consistent efforts of MyGov Team and respective state government's support, the initiative has been a great success and is able to efficiently achieve its objective.

- MyGov Goa portal will encourage people of the state to share their thoughts, ideas and suggestions with the Government in areas related to various policies, programs, schemes etc.

- MyGov had become a preferred platform for promoting active participation of citizens in Governance and development.

- Citizens may enroll on www.goa.mygov.in and share opinions, ideas and suggestions with the Government.

Education: Conclave on Transformational Reforms in Higher Education under National Education Policy (Part I)

Relevance IN -Prelims (about the conclave highlights)

What's the NEWS

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra will deliver the Inaugural Address at the 'Conclave on Transformational Reforms in Higher Education under National Education Policy

Know! more about the concave

- The conclave is being **organised by the Ministry of Education and University Grants Commission.**

- The conclave will have sessions dedicated to **significant aspects of education covered under the National Education Policy, 2020.**
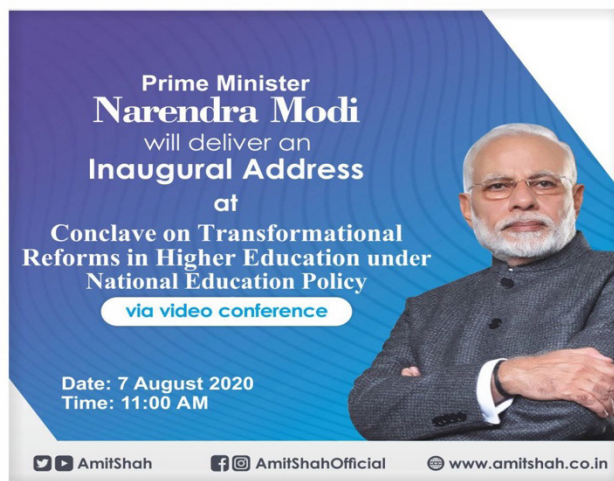
Governance: ITEC-NCGG International Workshop on COVID-19- Good Governance Practices in a Pandemic

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ITEC + NCGC and about the workshop highlights) + Mains (GS II Governance)

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister of State for Personnel, PG and Pensions inaugurated an international workshop on "COVID-19-Good Governance Practices in a Pandemic", jointly organized by **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), Ministry of External Affairs and National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.**

Know! about the conference

- The two-day Conference is being attended by 184 participants comprising Diplomats, Civil Servants and Health Experts from 26 Countries spread over South Asia, South East Asia, Latin America and Africa.
- The Workshop was jointly conceptualized by the Ministry of External Affairs, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and National Centre for Good Governance with the objective of disseminating India's good governance practices to ITEC countries.

Know! about NCGC

- The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) is an autonomous institute under the aegis of Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India. Its head office is at New Delhi and registered office at Mussoorie.
- The NCGG has been set up to assist in bringing about governance reforms through studies, training, knowledge sharing and promotion of good ideas.
- The National Centre for Good Governance traces its origin to the **National Institute of Administrative Research (NIAR).**
- NIAR was set up in 1995 by the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA).
- NIAR was subsequently rechristened with an expanded mandate, as National Centre for Good Governance, which was inaugurated on February 24th, 2014.

Its main objectives are:

- To be a **think tank for governance & policy reforms**, working across administrative, social, financial and political arenas.
- To **initiate and participate in research and training** on various aspects of regulatory and developmental administration, public policy, governance and public management.
- To provide a platform for policy development debates and discussions.
- To promote exchange of innovative ideas and best practices in Governance by organising, sponsoring and aiding seminars, workshops, study circles, working groups and conferences.
- To interact with national and international organisations, in and outside government, engaged in research and training in subject areas of mutual interest.

Know! about ITEC

- The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme was instituted by a decision of the Indian Cabinet as a **bilateral programme of assistance of the Government of India.**
- ITEC Programme was launched in 1964 by the **Ministry of External Affairs.**
- It is a **demand-driven, response-oriented programme** that focuses on addressing the needs of developing countries through innovative technological cooperation between India and the partnering nation.
- The ITEC Programme is essentially bilateral in nature. However, in recent years, ITEC resources have also been used for cooperation programmes conceived in **regional and inter-regional contex**t such as Economic Commission for Africa, Commonwealth Secretariat, UNIDO, Group of 77 and G-15.
- In more recent years, its activities have also been associated with regional and multilateral organizations and cooperation groupings like *Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC), African Union (AU), Afro-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO), Pan African Parliament, Caribbean Community (CARICOM), World Trade Organization (WTO) and Indian Ocean Rim - Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) and India-Africa Forum Summit.*
- The ITEC Programme, **fully funded by the Government of In**dia, has evolved and grown over the years.
- **Under ITEC and its sister programme SCAAP** (Special Commonwealth African Assistance Programme), 161 countries in Asia, Africa, East Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean as well as Pacific and Small Island countries are invited to share in the Indian developmental experience acquired over six decades of India's existence as a free nation.

The ITEC/SCAAP Programme has the following components :

- Training (civilian and defence) in India of nominees from ITEC partner countries;

- Projects and project related activities such as feasibility studies and consultancy services;
- Deputation of Indian experts abroad;
- Study Tours;
- Gifts/Donations of equipment at the request of ITEC partner countries; and
- Aid for Disaster Relief.

Social Issues: 6th National Handloom Day

Relevance IN – Prelims (about National Handloom day and initiatives launched to promote textile industry) + Mains (GS II Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India to celebrate National Handloom Day
- The Prime Minister declared 7th August every year as National Handloom Day for the first time in 2015, 110 years after the Swadeshi movement which started on this date in the year 1905.

Handloom Mark Scheme (HLM)

- On this occasion the textile Ministry launched the Mobile App & Backend Website for **Handloom Mark Scheme (HLM).**
- The Handloom Mark is being promoted to provide collective identity to the **authentic handloom products**.
- Textiles Committee Mumbai has developed the Mobile App with a backend web portal to completely digitise the process of registration.
- The App will enable the weavers located at any corner of the country to **apply for Handloom Mark registration** through the comfort of their homes by click of a button on their mobiles.
- This app helps ascertain the genuineness and originality of the product through unique and dynamic QR code labels affixed on each handloom product.

My Handloom portal

- The Union Minister of Textiles also launched the "My Handloom" portal **for individual weavers as well as other organizations** for applying for various benefits under the various handloom schemes like Block Level Clusters, Handloom Marketing Assistance and Awards.
- The "India Handloom" brand was launched in 2015 on the occasion of the 1st National Handloom Day.
- The portal with a single "sign-in" is to act as **One-stop shop for information on all handloom schemes** which will retain information, and will ensure transparency and provide real-time status update on applications under National handloom Development programme

Indian Textile Sourcing Fair 2020.

- The Union Minister of Textiles also inaugurated the virtual Indian Textile Sourcing Fair 2020.

- The Government is providing online marketing opportunities to weavers and handloom producers.

- By taking a step towards realizing "Atmanirbhar Bharat", Handloom Export Promotion Council is organizing the Virtual Fair.

- The fair will connect more than 150 participants from different regions of the country showcasing their products with unique designs and skills.

- The Indian Textile Sourcing Fair will be open on 7, 10 and 11th August 2020.

- *To promote Handlooms in a big way, Ministry of Textiles has undertaken many new initiatives. Steps have been taken to on-board weavers/producers on Government e-Market place (GeM) to enable them supply handloom products directly to Central Govt. Departments*

Prelims Factoids: Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra + about Swachh Bharat Mission + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

What's the NEWS

- Prime Minister inaugurated the Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra - an interactive experience centre on the Swachh Bharat Mission

- A tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, the Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra (RSK) was first announced by the Prime Minister on 10th April 2017, on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of Gandhiji's Champaran Satyagraha.

Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra

- The RSK has a balanced mix of digital and outdoor installations tracking India's transformation from having **over 50 crore people defecating in the open in 2014 to becoming open defecation free in 2019.**

- RSK will narrate India's Swachhata Story - a journey into the largest **behaviour change camp**aign in the history of the world, the Swachh Bharat Mission.

- The Prime Minister launched '**Gandagi Mukt Bharat'**, a special week long campaign for swachhata in the run up to Independence Day, during which each day till 15th August will have special swachhata initiatives in urban and rural India to re-enforce the jan andolan for swachhata.

- The Swachh Bharat Mission has transformed rural sanitation in the country and has changed the behaviour of over 55 crore people from open defecation to using a toilet.
- The **mission is now in its second phase**, aiming to take India's villages from Open Defecation Free (ODF) to ODF Plus, with a strong focus on sustaining ODF status and ensuring solid and liquid waste management for all.

Know! about Swachh Bharat Mission

- To accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put the focus on sanitation, the Prime Minister of India had launched the Swachh Bharat Mission on 2nd October 2014.
- Under the mission, all villages, Gram Panchayats, Districts, States and Union Territories in India declared themselves "open-defecation free" (ODF) by 2 October 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, by constructing over 100 million toilets in rural India.
- It was a country-wide campaign from 2014 to 2019, to eliminate open defecation and improve solid waste management (SWM) in urban and rural areas in India.
- The objectives of the mission also included eradication of manual scavenging, generating awareness and bringing about a behavior change regarding sanitation practices, and augmentation of capacity at the local level.

The mission was split into two: rural and urban.

- **In rural areas "SBM - Gramin"** was financed and monitored through the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation; whereas "**SBM - urban**" was overseen by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- As part of the campaign, volunteers, known as **Swachhagrahis, or "Ambassadors of cleanliness"**, promoted indoor plumbing and community approaches to sanitation (CAS) at the village level.
- The Mission is moving towards the next Phase II of SBMG i.e ODF-Plus.
- ODF Plus activities under Phase II of Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) will reinforce ODF behaviours and focus on providing interventions for the safe management of solid and liquid waste in villages.

Achievements

- **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U)** - Achieved its target of creating Urban India Open Defecation Free (ODF)
- **Swachh Bharat Mission (G) Phase-I** - The rural sanitation coverage in the country has increased from 38.7% to 100%.
- More than 10 crore individual toilets have been constructed since the launch of the mission.
- All rural areas in all the States have declared themselves ODF as on 2nd October, 2019.

Health and Family Welfare: eSanjeevani and eSanjeevaniOPD

Relevance IN – Prelims (about eSanjeevani" and "eSanjeevaniOPD" platforms) + Mains GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/ Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, presided over a review meeting with States/UTs on the "**eSanjeevani" and "eSanjeevaniOPD"** platforms as 1.5 lakh tele-consultations were completed on the tele-medicine service platforms of the Health Ministry.
- In a short span of time since November 2019, tele-consultation by eSanjeevani and eSanjeevani OPD have been implemented by 23 States (which covers 75% of the population) and other States are in the process of rolling it out.
- The national telemedicine service has completed more than 1,50,000 tele-consultations enabling **patient to doctor consultations** from the confines of their home, as well as **doctor to doctor consultations.**

TOI INFOGRAPHICS
e-sanjeevani
How Telemedicine Works
From Google Play store, download the app 'esanjeevaniopd.in' on your android device, and follow these steps

STEP 1
Registration and token generation
➤ Verify mobile number using OTP
➤ Fill patient registration form
➤ Request for a token
➤ Upload health records, if any
➤ Receive patient ID and token on SMS

STEP 2
Login
➤ Wait for SMS to login
➤ Login with patient ID

STEP 3
Waiting room
➤ Enter the virtual waiting room
➤ A 'call now' button will get activated in a while
➤ Start a video call

STEP 4
Consultation
➤ Doctor will show up
➤ Consult the doctor
➤ Get instant e-prescription

Infographic: **Ankur Sharma** | Text: **Shimona Kanwar**
THE TIMES OF INDIA CHANDIGARH

Know! about eSanjeevani" and "eSanjeevaniOPD

- The eSanjeevani platform has enabled two types of telemedicine services viz. **Doctor-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani) and Patient-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani OPD) Tele-consultations.**

- The former is being implemented under the **Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centre (AB-HWCs) programme.**

- It is planned to implement tele-consultation in all the 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres (as spokes) in a 'Hub and Spoke' model, by December 2022.

- States have identified and set up dedicated 'Hubs' in Medical Colleges and District hospitals to provide tele-consultation services to 'Spokes', i.e SHCs and PHCs.

- As on date, 12,000 users comprising Community Health Officers and Doctors have been trained to make use of this national e-platform.

- Presently, telemedicine is being provided through more than 3,000 HWCs in 10 States.

- Owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Health Ministry launched the second tele-consultation service enabling patient-to-doctor telemedicine through 'eSanjeevaniOPD'.

Human Resource Development: Minimum Standards of Architectural Education Regulations, 2020

Relevance IN -Prelims (about Minimum Standards of Architectural Education Regulations, 2020 -highlights + Council of Architecture (COA) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

What's the NEWS

- Ministry of Education, launched the Minimum Standards of Architectural Education Regulations, 2020

- The regulations were launched by the Education Minister and it replaces the Council of Architecture (Minimum Standards of Architectural Education) Regulations, 1983.

Minimum Standards of Architectural Education Regulations, 2020 (highlights)

- The 'Minimum Standards of Architectural Education' states that B.Arch students can exit the programme after three years and can get an 'appropriate degree'.

- The new COA regulations have been designed in accordance with the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP).

- The new regulations also offer a semester exchange option to the students, in flexibility to offer courses.

- Council of Architecture (COA) should draw inspiration from the present and past treasures of Architecture and bring a paradigm shift in the field of Architecture

Council of Architecture (COA)

- The Council of Architecture (COA) is a **statutory body** constituted by the Government of India under the provisions of the **Architects Act, 1972, enacted** by the Parliament of India, which came into force on 1 September 1972.

- The Act provides for registration of Architects, standards of education, recognized qualifications and standards of practice to be complied with by the practicing architects.

- The Council of Architecture is charged with the responsibility to regulate the education and practice of profession throughout India besides maintaining the register of architects.

- Any person willing to pursue 'Architecture' as a profession will have to register with the Council of Architecture (COA).

- For this purpose, the Government of India has framed Rules and Council of Architecture has framed Regulations as provided for in the Architects Act, with the approval of Government of India.

Government Schemes/Governance: Swachh Bharat Mission Academy

Relevance IN -Prelims (about Swachh Bharat Mission Academy and its objective Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister for Jal Shakti, launched the Swachh Bharat Mission Academy as part of the ongoing week-long behaviour change campaign **'GandagiMukt Bharat'**.
- Swachh Bharat Mission Academy, with its **mobile based technology** will significantly boost the capacity building efforts in training of Swachhagrahis as well as PRIs members, community-based organizations, NGOs, SHGs and others who are associated with phase 2 of SBM(G).

Swachh Bharat Mission Academy

- For sustaining the behaviour change and promoting the capacity building of the key stakeholders i.e. Swachhagrahis and other field functionaries, this IVR based free mobile online learning course on ODF Plus will be crucial in achieving goals underlined in Phase 2 of SBM(G).
- Phone-based academy will provide this free of charge, access to on-demand, anytime, anywhere training course with high quality and standardized content over basic mobile phone & also improve the knowledge and interpersonal communication skills in order to enhance the quality of interaction with the beneficiaries.
- The IVR based training course contains a 60 minutesmodule spanning various topics under ODF-S as well as SLWM.
- The SBM Academy course has four chapters, each with four audio lessons and a multiple-choice quiz at the end of the chapter.
- To be considered successful, the user must answer at least 50% of the questions correctly.

Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)

- The Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) has transformed rural India by manifesting into a Jan Andolan for sanitation
- This led to the historic achievement of Open Defecation Free (ODF) declaration by all villages, districts and states on 2nd October, 2019 thus making rural India ODF.
- Taking forward the extraordinary success, Phase II of the SBM (G) was launched early this year, which focuses on ODF sustainability and Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM).
- The program will also work towards ensuring that no one is left behind and everyone uses a toilet.

Social Justice: The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Hindu Succession Act, 1956 + about The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 + Mains (GS II Social issues + Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary Ministries and Departments

What's the NEWS

- A three-judge Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra ruled that a Hindu woman's right to be a joint heir to the ancestral property is by birth and **does not depend on whether her father was alive or not** when the law was enacted in 2005.

Know! about the recent ruling

- The ruling now overrules the verdicts from 2015 and April 2018.
- It stated that a Hindu woman's right to be a joint heir to the ancestral property is by birth and does not depend on whether her father was alive or not when the law was enacted in 2005.
- It settles the law and expands on the intention of the 2005 legislation "to remove the discrimination as contained in section 6 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 by giving equal rights to daughters in the Hindu Mitakshara coparcenary property as the sons have.

Section 6 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956

- **Section 6** made provision of the devolution of interest in a coparcenary property of a person who died intestate.
- The **law** provided that when a person dies intestate leaving only male heirs, the coparcenary property will devolve accordingly to his male sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons.

The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005

- The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 gave Hindu women the right to be coparceners or joint legal heirs in the same way a male heir does.
- Women were recognised as coparceners or joint legal heirs for partition arising from 2005.
- Section 6 of the Act was amended that year to make a daughter of a coparcener also a coparcener by birth "in her own right in the same manner as the son".

Hindu Succession Act, 1956

- The Mitakshara school of Hindu law codified as the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 governed succession and inheritance of property **but only recognised males as legal heirs.**
- The law applied to everyone who is not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew by religion. Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains and followers of Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj are also considered Hindus for the purposes of this law.
- The law also gave the daughter the same rights and liabilities "in the coparcenary property as she would have had if she had been a son".

Governance: Transparent Taxation - Honouring the Honest

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Transparent Taxation + about Taxpayers Charter) + Mains (GS II Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications)

What's the NEWS

- Prime Minister launched a platform for "Transparent Taxation - Honouring the Honest

Know! about the launched platform

- The platform of "Transparent Taxation - Honouring the Honest, has been launched to meet the requirements of the 21st century taxation system.
- The platform has major reforms like Faceless Assessment, Faceless Appeal and Taxpayers Charter.
- **Faceless Assessment and Taxpayers Charter** have come into force from today while the facility of faceless appeal will be available for citizens across the country from 25th September i.e. Deen Dayal Upadhyay's birth anniversary.
- The new platform apart from being faceless is also aimed at boosting the confidence of the taxpayer and making him/her fearless.
- The new facilities launched today are a part of the Government's resolve to provide maximum governance with minimum government.

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- Selection only through system using data analytics & AI
- Abolition of territorial jurisdiction
- Automated random allocation of cases
- Central issuance of notices with Document Identification No. (DIN)
- No physical interface, No need to visit income tax office
- Team-based assessments and Team-based review
- Draft assessment order in one city, review in another city & finalisation in third city

EXCEPTIONS

CASES RELATING TO:

- Serious frauds, Major Tax Evasion, Sensitive & Search matters
- International tax
- Black Money Act & Benami Property

Know! some recent tax reforms

- The latest laws reduced the legal burden in the tax system where now the **limit of filing cases in the High Court has been fixed** at up to 1 crore rupees and up to 2 crores for filing in the Supreme Court.
- Initiatives like the **'Vivaad Se Vishwas' Scheme** pave the way for most of the cases to be settled out of court.
- Tax slabs have also been rationalised as a part of the ongoing reforms where there is **zero tax upto an income of 5 lakh rupees**, while the tax rate has reduced in the remaining slabs too.
- The ongoing reforms aim at making the tax system Seamless, Painless, Faceless.

Taxpayers Charter

- The Prime Minister also launched launch of Taxpayers Charter

- It is a significant step where the taxpayer is now assured of fair, courteous and rational behavior.

- The charter takes care of maintaining the dignity and sensitivity of the taxpayer and that is based on a trust factor and that the assessee cannot be merely doubted without a basis.

Challenges

- It can also not be denied that only **1.5 Crore people** pay the taxes in a country of 130 crores.

- Prime Minister urged people to introspect themselves and come forward to pay the taxes due.

Social Issues: Empowering Tribals, Transforming India

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Online Performance Dashboard and its objective) + Mains (GS II Social Justice + e governance- transparency and accountability)

What's the NEWS

- CEO,NITI Aayog inaugurated the"Online Performance Dashboard "Empowering Tribals, Transforming India"developed by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)

- The launch was made during the meeting taken by NITI Aayog to review the progress of Centrally Sponsored Scheme / Central sector schemes of MoTA in the light of national development agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), strategy for New India and other policy initiatives.

Know! about the Online Performance Dashboard

- Performance Dashboard is an interactive and dynamic online platform that showcases updated & real-time details of 11 schemes / initiatives of the Ministry for achieving these SDGs.

- The Dashboard captures performance of 5 Scholarship Schemes of Ministry wherein every year about 30 lakh underprivileged ST beneficiaries reap benefit to the tune of INR 2500 crores.

- The Dashboard also displays the details of functional schools under Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) scheme, schools under construction and district wise details of students in various EMRS schools.

- The Dashboard is part of Digital India Initiative to work towards empowering Scheduled Tribes and will bring efficiency and transparency in the system.

- The joint initiative of the Ministry with Facebook under Going Online as Leaders (GOAL) program and Sickle Cell Support Corner can also be viewed.

- The Dashboard has been developed by Centre of Excellence of Data Analytics (CEDA), organization under National Informatics Centre (NIC) with domain name (http://dashboard.tribal.gov.in).

Know! about Sustainable Development Goal

- SDGs were adopted in September, 2015 as a part of the resolution, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.

- At the Central Government level, NITI Aayog has been assigned the role of overseeing the implementation of 17 SDGs in the country.

Difference between CSS and CS

- Under **Central sector schemes (CS)**, it is 100% funded by the Union government and implemented by the **Central** Government machinery.

- Under **Centrally** Sponsored **Scheme** (CSS) a certain percentage of the funding is borne by the States in the ratio of 50:50, 70:30, 75:25 or 90:10 and the implementation is by the State Governments.

Bilateral relations: India, Maldives ink contract for development of five eco-tourism zones in Addu atoll of island nation

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Addu atoll- geographical location + about atoll)

What's the NEWS

- India and Maldives signed a contract for development of five eco-tourism zones in Addu atoll of the island nation.

Know! more about the agreement

- These eco tourism zones are part of grant projects being implemented under the **High-Impact Community Development project (HICDP) scheme** which involves a total grant assistance of 5.5 million US dollars to the Maldives.

- Currently, there are 9 such high-impact projects being implemented in the Maldives.

- The other three HICDP projects in Addu, relating to setting up of fish-processing plants, were awarded last month.

- These projects could be expected to bring about a transformation in the economic and employment landscape of Addu.

Know! about Addu Atoll

- Addu Atoll, also known as Seenu Atoll, is the southernmost atoll of the Maldives.

- Addu Atoll, together with Fuvahmulah, located 40 km north of Addu Atoll, extend the Maldives into the Southern Hemisphere.

- Addu Atoll has a number of other inhabited and uninhabited islands, including the island of Gan, where Gan International Airport is located.

Know! about Atoll

- An **atoll** is a ring-shaped coral reef, island, or series of islets.

- An **atoll** surrounds a body of water called a lagoon.

- Sometimes, **atolls** and lagoons protect a central island.

- Channels between islets connect a lagoon to the open ocean or sea.

- **Atolls** develop with underwater volcanoes, called seamounts.

Social Issues/International organisations: 4th Meeting of the BRICS Anti-Drug Working Group held

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Anti-Drug Working Group +steps taken by India + about BRICS) + Mains (GS II Social issues + international organisations)

What's the NEWS

- The 4th Session of the BRICS Anti-Drug Working Group comprising of Brazil, Russia, China, South Africa and India was held

- This year's session, held over video conference on August 12, 2020, was **chaired by Russia**.

Know! about session highlights

- The common points emerged during the discussions include need for real time information sharing among the member states and need to curb increased drug trafficking through maritime routes.

- Misuse of darknet and other advanced technologies for drug trafficking was one of the key focal areas of the meeting.
- The member nations adopted a communiqué that covered all the points discussed in the meeting.

Steps taken by India to curb drug trafficking

Nasha Mukt Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21)

- Nasha Mukt Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21) for **272 Most Affected Districts'** was launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on the occasion of "International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking"
- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment observes 26th June every year as "**International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking".**
- It is the nodal Ministry for drug demand reduction which coordinates and monitors all aspects of drug abuse prevention
- Nasha Mukt Bharat Annual Action Plan for 2020-21 would focus on 272 most affected districts and launch a three-pronged attack combining efforts of **Narcotics Bureau, Outreach/Awareness by Social Justice and Treatment through the Health Dept.**

The Action Plan has the following components:

- Awareness generation programmes; Focus on Higher Educational institutions, University Campuses and Schools; Community outreach and identification of dependent population; Focus on Treatment facilities in Hospital settings; and Capacity Building Programmes for Service Provider.

National Survey on Extent and Pattern of Substance Use

- Based on the finding of the National Survey on Extent and Pattern of Substance Use in India and **list of districts which are vulnerable** from the supply point of view provided by Narcotics Control Bureau, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment would undertake intervention programmes in **vulnerable districts across the country**

National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (2018-2025)

- The Ministry has also prepared a National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction for the period 2018-2025 which aims at reduction of adverse consequences of drug abuse through a multi-pronged strategy involving education, **de-addiction and rehabilitation** of affected individuals and their families.
- The Action Plan includes components for **preventive education and awareness generation,** capacity building, treatment and rehabilitation, setting quality standards, focussed intervention in vulnerable areas, skill development, vocational training and livelihood support of ex-drug addicts, State/UT specific interventions, surveys, studies, evaluation and research etc.

Know! about BRICS

- BRICS is an informal group of states comprising the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa.
- Among other areas of collaboration, matters pertaining to drug trafficking is an important area of cooperation among the BRICS member states.

Social Issues: Tribal Health And Nutrition Portal 'Swasthya'

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Swasthya Portal) + Mains (GS II social issues – Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

What's the NEWS

- Union Tribal Affairs Minister launched "Swasthya", a first of its kind Tribal Health & Nutrition Portal: One-stop solution **for the health & nutrition status of the tribal population of India**

Know! about SWASTHYA

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs **in collaboration with Piramal Swasthya, the Centre of Excellence** has developed this Tribal Health and Nutrition Portal 'Swasthya', a one-stop solution presenting all information pertaining to tribal health and nutrition related to **Scheduled Tribe people.**

- 'Swasthya' is the first of its kind comprehensive platform for health and nutrition related information of the tribal population of India.

- It has a dashboard, knowledge repository, partner segment, Sickle Cell Diseases (SCD) support corner.

- The dashboard presents data curated from multiple sources for the 177 identified high priority tribal districts.

- In addition, the Portal also has research studies, innovations and best practices on tribal community curated from multiple sources related to tribal health and nutrition.

- It is hoped that this Portal will bridge the existing knowledge, drive evidence-based policy making and catalyze a series of actions which will ultimately lead to overall improvements in the health and nutrition status of the tribal population in India.

- The Portal will be managed by the **Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Knowledge Management in Health and Nutrition,** established by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in collaboration with Piramal Swasthya Management and Research Institute.

- This CoE works towards consolidating data for tribal health & nutrition, facilitating evidence-based policy making, documenting successful models, best practices and innovative solutions, disseminating and facilitating exchange of knowledge, creating networks and collaborating with stakeholders to improve tribal health & nutrition outcomes.

Other initiatives of Tribal Ministry

- Going Online as Leaders (GOAL) Programme is the initiative of the Ministry in partnership with Facebook

- Through the GOAL Programme, the Ministry **aims to mentor 5000 Tribal Youth across India** and enable them to become village-level digital young leaders for their communities.

- The initiative will realize its objectives and result in empowering tribal youth to become leading resource in their area of influence and help tribal youth and enable them to gain leadership skills, identify problems in their society, find solutions and use their knowledge for society's socio-economic status.

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been recently **awarded the 66th SKOCH Gold Award for** "Empowerment of Tribals through IT enabled Scholarship Schemes" under guidance of DBT Mission.

Social Issues: NASHAMUKT BHARAT CAMPAIGN

Relevance IN – Prelims (about"Nasha Mukt Bharat" campaign) + Mains (GS II Social issues)

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment addressed the gathering of 272 District Collectors, Officers of Narcotics Control Bureau, Doctors and all the officers involved with "Nasha Mukt Bharat" campaign in the States and Districts

Know! about Nasha Mukt Bharat Campaign

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has formulated 'Nasha Mukt Bharat Campaign' being implemented in 272 districts which are identified as most affected in terms of usage of substances.
- State Governments and the 272 District Collectors are going to launch the Nasha Mukht Bharat Campaign on 15th August 2020 which will run for 7 months till 31st March 2021.
- District and State level Nasha Mukt Bharat Committees formed would devise a strategy and Action plan for the campaign.
- These committees would ensure that campaign activities are effectively implemented, and the objectives of the campaign are met.
- These 272 districts have been identified based on the inputs received from Narcotics Control Bureau and the findings on the comprehensive National survey done by the Ministry.
- The Campaign focuses on 272 most affected districts by launching a three-pronged attack combining efforts of **Narcotics Bureau, Outreach/Awareness by Social Justice and Treatment through the Health Department.**

The Campaign Plan has the following components:

- Awareness generation programmes;
- Focus on Higher Educational institutions, University Campuses and Schools;
- Community outreach and identification of dependent population;
- Focus on Treatment facilities in Hospital settings; and
- Capacity Building Programmes for Service Provider.

Human Resource Development: ARIIA-2020 (Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ARIIA 2020 – highlights) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

What's the NEWS

- The Vice-President of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu virtually announced Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) 2020.

Atal rankings ARIIA 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- This year, a **special category for higher educational institutions for wo**men has been introduced to encourage women and bringing gender parity in the areas of innovation and entrepreneurship, top place for which was secured by Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women under this category.
- This year, ARIIA announcement included classification of the institutes into two broad categories and six sub categories.

- Among these, **IIT Madras** bagged the top position under the category of Institutes of National Importance, Central Universities, and Centrally Funded Technical Institutes

- IIT Mumbai and IIT Delhi clinched the second and third place respectively.

- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore stood at the fourth place, while IIT Kharagpur was at fifth in the prestigious Institutes of National Importance and central universities category.

- **Institute of Chemical Technology**, Mumbai got the top position under Government and Government Aided Universities

- **College of Engineering**, Pune under Government and Government Aided Colleges

- **Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology**, Bhubaneswar under Private or Self-Financed Universities and S R Engineering College, Warangal under Private or Self-Financed Colleges were declared on top positions respectively.

Other Highlights

- Ministry of Education has taken several policy initiatives and new programs to make Innovation an integral part of Higher Education System in India.

- One such initiative was the establishment of **Ministry's Innovation Cell** to ensure that various activities and hackathons pertaining to Innovation and entrepreneurship are taken forward at Higher Educational Institute level in a very systematic way.

Know! about ARIIA

- Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) is an initiative of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt. of India to systematically rank all major **higher educational institutions and universities** in India on indicators related to "**Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development**" amongst students and faculties.

- The ranking, which aims to promote innovation among Indian educational institutions, assess colleges and varsities on criteria ranging from **support for entrepreneurship development to innovative learning method, intellectual property generation, technology tra**nsfer and commercialisation among other aspects.

Assessment of innovation and startup ecosystem in HEIs will be based on Seven parameters with certain weightages allocated as below.

- Budget, Expenses to Support & Revenue Generated (20 Marks)

- Infrastructures & Facilities to Support Innovations and Start-ups (10 Marks)

- Awareness Activities for Promoting Idea Generation and Innovation (20 Marks)

- Promotion and Supporting Entrepreneurship Development (20 Marks)

- Intellectual Property (IP) Generation, Technology Transfer and Commercialization (14 Marks)

- Innovative Learning Methods & Courses (10 Marks)
- Innovations in Governance of the Institution (6 Marks)

Education: National Recruitment Agency to conduct Common Eligibility Test

Relevance IN – Prelims (about National Recruitment Agency (NRA) – highlights) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

What's the NEWS

- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for creation of National Recruitment Agency (NRA), paving the way for a transformational reform in the recruitment process for central government jobs.

National Recruitment Agency (NRA) -Highlights

- A multi-agency body called the National Recruitment Agency (NRA) will conduct a Common Eligibility Test (CET) to screen/shortlist candidates for the Group B and C (non-technical) posts.
- NRA will have representatives of Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Finance/Department of Financial Services, the SSC, RRB & IBPS.
- It is envisioned that the NRA would be a specialist body bringing the state-of-the-art technology and best practices to the field of Central Government recruitment.
- Under the NRA, the candidates by appearing in one examination will get an opportunity to compete for many posts.
- NRA will conduct the first-level /Tier I Examination which is the stepping stone for many other selections.
- The CET score of the candidate shall be valid for a period of three years from the date of declaration of the result.

Single exam | The National Recruitment Agency (NRA) will conduct a Common Eligibility Test (CET) for recruitment to government jobs

- The NRA will initially conduct the CET for three sectors — Railway Recruitment Board, Staff Selection Commission and Institute of Banking Personnel Selection
- It will be held separately for three levels — graduate, 12th pass and 10th pass — for the non-technical posts of the three agencies
- Examination will be conducted online twice a year in 12 languages and will be based on a common curriculum
- Scores will be valid for a three-year period. Students can write the test multiple times and their best score will be taken into account
- According to the DoPT Secretary, there are 1.25 lakh vacancies every year in Group B and C for non-gazetted officers, and about 2.5 crore people apply every year for examinations to fill these vacancies

National Recruitment Agency (NRA)
COMMON ELIGIBILITY TEST (CET) GIVES MORE CHOICE TO JOB SEEKERS (1/2)

Separate CET to be conducted for three levels -
- Graduate
- Higher Secondary (12th)
- Matriculate (10th pass)

For non technical posts, **CET shall replace the Tier I exam** held by SSC, Railway recruitment boards & Institute of Banking Personnel Selection

CET to **shortlist candidates for Group B and C posts** in Central government

National Recruitment Agency (NRA)
COMMON ELIGIBILITY TEST (CET) GIVES MORE CHOICE TO JOB SEEKERS (2/2)

Standard Curriculum & degree of difficulty; to be conducted in multiple Indian languages

Based on CET score, final selection to be made through **separate specialised Tier 2/Tier 3 examinations** conducted by respective recruitment agency

CET score of a candidate will be valid for 3 years, best available score during 3 years will be the current score

No restriction on number of attempts by the candidate, subject to upper age limit prescribed

Relaxation in upper age limit to be given to candidates of SC/ST/OBC/PwD etc

- The best of the valid scores shall be deemed to be the current score of the candidate.
- There shall be no restriction on the number of attempts to be taken by a candidate to appear in the CET subject to the upper age limit.

- NRA shall conduct a separate CET each for the **three levels of graduate, higher secondary (12th pass) and the matriculate (10th pass) candidates** for those **non-technical posts** to which recruitment is presently carried out by the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), the Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs) and by the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS).
- Based on the screening done at the CET score level, final selection for recruitment shall be made through separate specialised Tiers (II, III etc) of examination which shall be conducted by the respective recruitment agencies.
- The curriculum for this test would be common as would be the standard.
- The CET would be available in a number of languages.
- Initially the scores would be used by the three major recruitment agencies.
- Later it would be open for other agencies in the public as well as private domain to adopt it if they so choose.
- The Government has sanctioned a sum of Rs. 1517.57 crore for the National Recruitment Agency (NRA).
- The expenditure will be undertaken over a period of three years. Apart from setting up the NRA, costs will be incurred for setting up examination infrastructure in the 117 Aspirational Districts.

Human Resource Development: Students' Learning Enhancement Guidelines

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Students' Learning Enhancement Guidelines) + Mains (GS II Social issues + Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/ Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

What's the NEWS

- Union Education Minister virtually releases Students' Learning Enhancement Guidelines
- Due to unequal access to digital resources to get school education at home, the concerns of equity and inclusion can lead to deficiencies in learning of children.
- In view of this, NCERT has prepared Students' Learning Enhancement Guidelines on the direction of the Ministry of Education for the present situation and also for post pandemic situation.

Students' Learning Enhancement Guidelines -highlights

- These guidelines, models are suggested for the following three types of situations.
- Firstly, in which students do not have any digital resources.
- Secondly, in which students have limited digital resources available.
- Lastly, in which students have digital resources available for online education.
- These guidelines emphasize upon the community working closely with the school to get learning materials such as workbooks, worksheets, etc. delivered at the doorsteps of children by teachers and volunteers.
- It also suggests to teach local students by volunteers or teachers setting up television at the community centre and maintaining social distance norms.
- These guidelines also talks about setting up of a helpline at the community center with the help of members of the community and Panchayati Raj.
- It recommends orientation of parents to support and participate in the learning of their children.
- These guidelines will help children, who do not have digital resources to get learning opportunities at home with their teachers or volunteers.

Health: FSSAI's Eat Right Challenge Orientation Workshop

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Eat Right India movement + about FSSAI)

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare presided over an online orientation workshop organised by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) as part of its Eat Right Challenge.

EAT RIGHT CHALLENGE
Orientation Workshop

197 cities and districts participating in the Eat Right Challenge

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India

fssai
Eat Right India
सही भोजन. बेहतर जीवन.
#EatRightIndia

Date: August 19, 2020
Time: 03:00 PM
Venue: Nirman Bhawan New Delhi

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- He also launched FSSAI's 'Eat Right India' Handbook and the website *eatrightindia.gov.in* to help various stakeholders scale up 'Eat Right India' initiatives across the country.

Know! about Eat Right India movement

- The 'Eat Right India' movement initiated by FSSAI under the aegis of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has been creating awareness amongst the people about safe, healthy and sustainable dietary habits.

- To achieve this end and to convert the program into a people's movement, FSSAI recently announced the Eat Right Challenge, an annual competition for 197 Districts and Cities in a unique way to strengthen the food safety and regulatory environment, build awareness among the consumers and urge them to make better food choices.

- The Food Safety Commissioners and district officials such as District Magistrates and Designated Officers of the cities also joined in the online workshop.

Know! more about The Eat Right Movement

- To improve public health in India and combat negative nutritional trends to fight lifestyle diseases, FSSAI launched 'The Eat Right Movement' on 10th July, 2018.

- The food industry, public health professionals, civil society and consumer organizations, influencers and celebrities came together on a common platform and pledged to take concrete steps to amplify 'The Eat Right Movement' in the country.

- The strength of the 'The Eat Right Movement' lies in its holistic and collaborative approach, with stakeholders on both the demand and supply-side

- On the demand side, the Eat Right Movement focuses on empowering citizens to make the right food choices.

- On the supply side, it nudges food businesses to reformulate their products, provide better nutritional information to consumers and make investments in healthy food as responsible food businesses.

- The Eat Right Movement' brings together three ongoing initiatives of FSSAI:

- Safe and Nutritious Food Initiative - focused on social and behavioural change around food safety and nutrition at home, school, workplace and on-the-go;

- The Eat Healthy Campaign - focused on reduction of high fat, sugar and salt foods in the diet; and

- Food Fortification – focused on promoting five staple foods-wheat flour, rice, oil, milk and salt that are added with key vitamins and minerals to improve their nutritional content

Know! about FSSAI

- **The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has been established under Food Safety and Standards, 2006 which consolidates various acts & orders that have hitherto handled food related issues in various Ministries and Departments.

- FSSAI has been created for laying down science based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.
- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is the Administrative Ministry for the implementation of FSSAI.

Government Schemes: Mobile App Launched to Provide User Friendly Digital Interface to Source Loan Applications of Street Vendors

Relevance IN – Prelims (about (PM SVANidhi) Scheme) + Mains (GS II Social issues - Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population + e governance)

What's the NEWS

- Prime Minister Street Vendors AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme which has been launched to provide credit for working capital to street vendors to resume their business.
- Minister launched a Mobile App for ULB functionaries. This App aims to provide user friendly digital interface for the functionaries of ULBs to source loan applications of street vendors.
- With the purpose of taking the microcredit facility to the door step of the vendors a Mobile App for Lending Institutions has already been launched by the Ministry

Know! all about PM SVANidhi

- PM SVANidhi was launched by the Ministry on June 01, 2020, for providing affordable Working Capital loan to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to Covid-19 lockdown.
- This scheme targets to benefit over 50 lakh Street Vendors who had been vending on or before 24 March, 2020, in urban areas including those from surrounding peri-urban/ rural areas.
- Under the Scheme, the vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000, which is repayable in monthly instalments in the tenure of one year.
- On timely/ early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy @ 7% per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer on quarterly basis.
- There will be no penalty on early repayment of loan.
- The scheme promotes digital transactions through cash back incentives up to an amount of Rs. 100 per month.
- The vendors can achieve their ambition of going up the economic ladder by availing the facility of enhancement of the credit limit on timely/ early repayment of loan.

Health: 'eSanjeevani' telemedicine service records 2 lakh tele-consultations

Relevance IN – Prelims (about eSanjeevani' digital platform)

What's the NEWS

- The '*eSanjeevani*' digital platform of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has completed 2 lakh tele-consultations.

Know! about eSanjeevani platform

- *eSanjeevani* platform has enabled two types of telemedicine services viz. Doctor-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani) and Patient-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani OPD) Tele-consultations.
- The former is being implemented under the Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centre (AB-HWC).
- It aims to implement tele-consultation in all the 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres in conjunction with identified Medical College hospitals in a 'Hub and Spoke' model.
- States have identified and set up dedicated 'Hubs' in Medical Colleges and District hospitals to provide tele-consultation services to 'Spokes', i.e SHCs, PHCs and HWCs.
- The Health Ministry rolled out the second tele-consultation service 'eSanjeevaniOPD' enabling patient-to-doctor telemedicine owing to the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020.
- This has proved a boon in containing the spread of COVID while simultaneously enabling provisions for non-COVID essential healthcare.

career Launcher IAS

- *eSanjeevani* has been implemented so far by 23 States and other States are in the process of rolling it out.
- The top five States which have been utilizing the e-health services being offered through this platform are Tamil Nadu (56,346 consultations), Uttar Pradesh (33,325), Andhra Pradesh (29,400), Himachal Pradesh (26,535) and Kerala (21,433).
- Andhra Pradesh leads in having the most HWC-medical college interactions with 25,478 consultations while Tamil Nadu leads in the OPD services with 56,346 consultations.

Social Issues: Trifood Project of Trifed

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Trifood and the role of TRIFED) + Mains (GS II Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

What's the NEWS

- Union Tribal Affairs Minister e-launched the tertiary processing centres of "Trifood Project" of TRIFED in Raigad, Maharashtra and in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh

Know! about this project objective

- Being implemented by TRIFED, **Ministry of Tribal Affairs in association with Ministry of Food Processing (MoFPI),** TRIFOOD aims to enhance the income of tribals through better utilization of and value addition to the MFPs collected by the tribal forest gatherers.
- To achieve this, as a start, two Minor Forest Produce (MFP) processing units will be set up.
- TRIFOOD project in Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra is an attempt to offer a comprehensive development package for tribals by promoting, employment, incomes and entrepreneurship.
- Implemented by TRIFED in association with State Government Agencies across 21 states of the country, the scheme has injected more than Rs 3000 crores directly in the tribal economy so far.
- This scheme draws its strength from The Forest Rights Act of 2005,aims to provide remunerative and fair prices to tribal gatherers of forest produces.
- The scheme ensures that the proceeds from the sales of these value-added products go to the tribals directly.

Know! about TRIFOOD Project

- The TRIFOOD project aims to converge both the components in its desired merits.
- In association with MoFPI, the units that will be set up under the Scheme for Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages under the Pradhan Mantri KisanSampada Yojana, will procure the raw material from the Van DhanKendras in the state.
- The fully processed products will be sold across the country in Tribes India outlets, and franchisee stores.

Government Schemes: Implementation of PMEGP Projects Records 44% Jump in 2020

Relevance IN – Prelims (about PMEGP + role of KVIC) + Mains (GS II Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes + Governance)

What's the NEWS

- The flagship Prime Minister Employment Generation Program (PMEGP) implemented by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) progressed at a much rapid pace.

- Due to the introduction of a new&faster mechanism in approving the PMEGP projects the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), has approved and forwarded 1.03 lakh project applications to the financing banks as compared to 71,556 projects during the corresponding period last year and thus registering a jump of 44%.

Know! about PMEGP and the recent amendment

- PMEGP is the flagship employment generation program of the Central government and KVIC is the nodal agency for implementing the scheme.

- The Ministry on April 28, this year amended the guidelines to do away with the role of the **District Level Task Force Committee (DLTFC)** in approving the PMEGP projects.

- The role of DLTFC, headed by the District Collectors, was time consuming.

- As per the amended guidelines, **KVIC, the nodal agency for implementing PMEGP scheme, was entrusted the task of clearing the applications from prospective entrepreneurs and forward it to the Banks** for taking credit decisions.

International Relations: Supply Chain Resilience Initiative

Relevance IN – Prelims (about supply chain resilience initiative) + Mains GS II Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

What's the NEWS

- Japan, India and Australia are seeking to build stronger supply chains to counter China's dominance as trade and geopolitical tensions escalate across the region

Know! more about supply chain resilience initiative

- The three nations are discussing building a "supply chain resilience initiative

- The talks are at a working level currently, but Japan would like to bring them to a higher level at some point

- India's government is considering the plan and will make a decision soon about whether to participate

- The Supply Chain Resilience Initiative first proposed by Japan.

- The objective is **to reduce the dependency in China**.

- It is a direct response to companies that are concerned about Chinese political behaviour and disruption to supply chain.

- The intensifying U.S.-China conflict and worsening diplomatic relations across the region are forcing companies to consider whether they can continue to do business in China as before.

Know! the objective of SCRI (initial rough blueprints)

- The main aim of the initiative is to attract foreign direct investment in the Indo-Pacific region.

- It also aims to turn the region to an economic powerhouse. Also, it aims to build partner relationship between the countries in the region.

- The idea of SCRI has been thrown open to the ASEAN countries as well.

- The two-fold objective of the Japanese proposal is to attract foreign direct investment to turn the Indo-Pacific into an "economic powerhouse" and to build a mutually complementary relationship among partner countries.

- The idea,was to also throw open the initiative to the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) after India-Japan-Australia understanding on the matter.
- SCRI is a direct response to individual companies and economies concerned about Chinese political behaviour and the disruption that could lead to supply chains

Know! about the quad

- Along with the **U.S., Japan, Australia and India** are members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad, a loose grouping for national security consultation.

International Organisations: Sixth Round Table of ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT) +about ASEAN + about EAS + Mains (GS II Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.)

What's the NEWS

- Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand organized the **6th Round Table of ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT)**

ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT)

- The ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at the Research and Information System for Development Countries (RIS) and ASEAN Studies Centre (ASC) at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok were the organizing partners of the Round Table.
- The theme of the Round Table was 'ASEAN-India: Strengthening Partnership in the Post COVID Era'.
- More than 400 people from academia, industry, government and diplomatic community attended the Round Table.
- The ASEAN-India Round Table comprising think tanks, policy makers, scholars, media and business representatives was established at the 7th ASEAN-India Summit in Thailand in 2009 to provide policy inputs to Governments on future direction of cooperation.
- The forum serves as a high quality research platform and provides long-term perspectives to further strengthen ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership.

Know! about ASEAN

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

- Brunei, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Cambodia on 30 joined after that making up what is today the ten Member States of ASEAN.

ASEAN Plus Six

- ASEAN Plus Three was the first of attempts for further integration to improve existing ties of Southeast Asia with East Asian countries of China, Japan and South Korea.

- This was followed by the even larger East Asia Summit (EAS), which included ASEAN Plus Three as well as India, Australia, and New Zealand.

Know! about East Asia Summit

- The East Asia Summit is a unique Leaders-led forum of 18 countries of the Asia-Pacific region formed to further the objectives of regional peace, security and prosperity.

- **Established in 2005,** EAS allows the principal players in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss issues of common interest and concern, in an open and transparent manner, at the highest level.

- The membership of EAS consists of ten ASEAN Member States (i.e. Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam), Australia, China**, India**, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and the USA.

- EAS is an initiative of ASEAN and is based on the premise of the centrality of ASEAN.

- The concept of an East Asia Grouping was first promoted in 1991 by the then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohamad.

- The final report of the East Asian Study Group in 2002, established by the ASEAN+3 countries (i.e. China, Japan and ROK), recommended EAS as an ASEAN led development limited to the ASEAN +3 countries.

- The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) held in Vientiane on July 26, 2005 welcomed the participation of ASEAN, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia, India and New Zealand, **in the first EAS.**

- USA and the Russian Federation were formally included as members of the EAS at the 6th EAS held in Bali, Indonesia on 19 November 2011.

- Twelve East Asia Summits have been held so far. India has been a part of this process since its inception in 2005 in Kuala Lumpur

- There are six priority areas of regional cooperation within the framework of the EAS. These are – Environment and Energy, Education, Finance, Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases, Natural Disaster Management, and ASEAN Connectivity.

- India endorses regional collaboration in all six priority areas.

Bilateral Relations: India, Israel sign cultural agreement

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the cultural agreement – key highlights) + Mains (GS II Bilateral relations)

What's the NEWS

- India and Israel signed a cultural agreement that **outlines a three-year programme of cooperation** to further strengthen their strategic bilateral relations.

Know! the important takeaways from the cultural agreement

- It aims to promote greater people-to-people exchanges.

- The agreement states that it shall contribute to the development of their relations and to raising awareness, particularly among youth, of the history and culture of the people of both countries.

- The programme of cooperation between the **two countries for the years 2020-23** is based on the **cultural agreement signed between them on May 18, 1993,** a little more than a year after they established full-fledged diplomatic relations.

- The major areas of cooperation identified to promote cultural ties include the exchange of culture and art experts, encouraging cooperation in the protection of cultural heritage and archaeology with the help of **Israel Antiquities Authority (IIA) and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** and organising literary fests and book fairs while promoting the translation of famous works in each other's languages.

- It also includes student exchanges through **scholarships, encouraging the participation of films and film-makers** in each other's international film festivals, devising youth exchange programmes and encouraging sports-related interaction among youth and to encourage direct contacts between national libraries and book publishers.

- Israel also signed a cooperation agreement with the Uttar Pradesh government on August 20 for resolving water crisis in Bundelkhand region.

International Relations: Turkey discovers large natural gas reserve off Black Sea
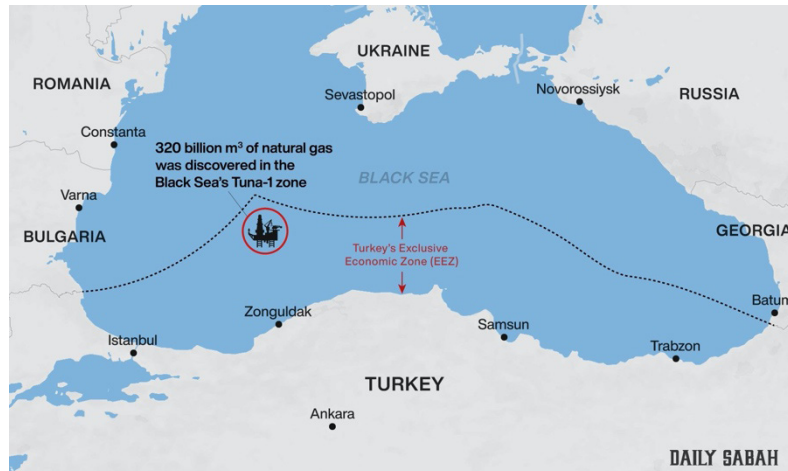
Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Conflict between Greece and Turkey – geographical locations + about Aegean dispute)

What's the NEWS

- The country had made its biggest-ever discovery of natural gas after completing new exploration work in the **Black Sea.**

- The discovery of 320 billion cubic meters of natural gas comes amid a dispute with Greece over prospecting.

Know! about the Conflict between Greece and Turkey

- Turkey's new Black Sea find comes amid raised tensions between Ankara and Athens over oil and gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean.

- Warships from both NATO members have been shadowing each other after Turkey sent a research ship to look for potential undersea oil and gas deposits in disputed waters.

- The Turkish drilling ship Fatih has been prospecting in the western Black Sea over the past month, close to where Romania has also found gas reserves.

- Turkey was drilling in the **Turkish-occupied regions of Cyprus**.

- The drilling regions comes under Greece inhabited exclusive economic zones.

- Turkey is the only member state of the United Nations that does not recognise Cyprus and is one of the few not signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Turkey is not a part of UNCLOS

- According to UNCLOS, exclusive economic zone extends to 200-miles.

The Aegean dispute

- The Aegean dispute is a set of interrelated controversies between **Greece and Turkey** over sovereignty and related rights in the region of the Aegean Sea.

- This set of conflicts has strongly affected Greek-Turkish relations since the 1970s

The Republic of Cyprus (Cyprus) and Turkey dispute

- Turkey is also at odd with Cyprus over energy exploration around the island.

- The Republic of Cyprus (Cyprus) and Turkey have been engaged in a dispute over the extent of their exclusive economic zones, ostensibly sparked by oil and gas exploration in the area.

Social Justice: National Council for Transgender Persons

Relevance IN – Prelims (about national council for transgender persons) + Mains (GS II Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

What's the NEWS

- The Centre has constituted the national council for transgender persons, headed by the Union social justice minster and comprising representatives from **10 central departments, five states** and members of the community.

Know! more about the council

- The council – India's first and formed under Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 – was announced in a gazette notification

  The council has five main functions –

  1. advising the central government on the formulation of policies, programmes, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons

  2. monitoring and evaluating the impact of policies and programmes designed for achieving equality and full participation of transgender persons

  3. reviewing and coordinating the activities of all the departments

  4. redressing grievances of transgender persons

  5. performing such other functions as prescribed by the Centre.

- The council will have joint secretary-level members from the ministries of health, home, minority affairs, education, rural development, labour and law.

- In addition, there will be a member from the **department of pensions, Niti Aayog, National Human Rights Commission and National Commission for Women.**

- Representatives from five states or Union Territories, on a rotational basis, will be members of the commission.

- The first such clutch comprises **Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tripura and Gujarat.**

- Five members of the community and five experts, from non-governmental organisations, have also been named to the commission.

- The tenure of the community members and expert shall be three years.

Way Forward

- The distinction between gender identity and sex characteristics is also not understood.

- To bring about changes in the existing governance regime, it is important to work and engage with the system.

- The aim will be to mainstream the trans community's concerns, focusing on livelihood issues as well as to raise awareness about the trans community, so that trans persons are accepted within families and in the larger society.

Social Issues: Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna and recent changes in it) + Mains (GS II Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes)

What's the NEWS

- The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has decided in favour of a slew of measures which include the extension of the 'Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna' for another one year to provide relief to workers in view of the Covid pandemic.

- The two-year scheme had completed its period on May 31, this year.

Know! the measures and amendments taken in Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna'

- The ESIC also decided to extend the relaxation in eligibility criteria and enhancement of unemployment benefit under the 'Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana' with retrospective effect from March 24 to December 31, 2020.

- Under the relaxed eligibility norm and enhancement, payment would now be made at 50 per cent of average wages payable for a maximum 90 days unemployment instead of 25 per cent earlier.

- Instead of the relief becoming payable 90 days after unemployment, it shall now become due for payment after 30 days.

- The claims for payment of unemployment benefit under its Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana run by the ESIC will be settled within 15 days from the date of an application.

- The insured person (IP) can submit the claim directly to the ESIC Branch Office instead of the claim being forwarded by the last employer and the payment shall be made directly to his bank account.

- The IP should have been insurable employment for a minimum period of two years before his/her unemployment and should have contributed for not less than 78 days in the contribution period immediately preceding to unemployment.

Know! about Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (prior to recent changes)

- The ESIC is implementing the 'Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyna Yojna' under which unemployment benefit is paid to the workers covered under the ESI Scheme.

- It is a welfare measure being implemented by the Employee's State Insurance (ESI) Corporation.

- It offers cash compensation to insured persons when they are rendered unemployed.

- The Scheme was introduced w.e.f. 01-07-2018. The scheme is implemented on pilot basis for a period of two years initially.

Benefits under the scheme

- The scheme provides relief to the extent of 25% of the average per day earning to be paid up to maximum 90 days of unemployment once in lifetime of the Insured Person.
- The maximum duration, for which an IP shall be eligible to draw the Relief under the Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (ABVKY) will be 90 days once in life time after a minimum of two years of Insurable Employment
- The claim for relief under the Atal Beemit Kalyaan Yojana will be payable after the three months of his/her clear unemployment.

Eligibility

- Employees covered under Section 2(9) of the ESI Act 1948.
- The Insured Person (IP) should have been rendered unemployed during the period the relief is claimed.
- The Insured Person should have been in insurable employment for a minimum period of two years.
- The Insured Person should have contributed not less than 78 days during each of the preceding four contribution periods.
- The contribution in respect of him should have been paid or payable by the employer.

Know! about ESIC

- Employees' State Insurance (abbreviated as ESI) is a self-financing social security and health insurance scheme for Indian workers.
- The fund is managed by the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) according to rules and regulations stipulated in the ESI Act 1948.
- ESIC is a Statutory Body and Administrative Ministry is Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India.

Defence: Cantonment Boards

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Cantonment board + about Chhavni COVID) + Mains (GSII Governance)

What's the NEWS

- Ministry of **Defence and Directorate General of Defence Estates (DGDE)** organised a webinar to improve implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) in 62 cantonments around the country

Know! about the webinar Cantonment Boards (highlights)

- Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of all 62 Cantonment Boards are attending the two-day webinar.
- It was organised with the objective to have better understanding of the implementation mechanism and funding of various Centrally Sponsored Schemes and to prepare a roadmap for extending the benefits of these to the residents of cantonment areas.
- The webinar was attended by the Joint Secretaries/Nodal Officers of the Ministries of Housing and Urban Affairs, Education, Health and Family Welfare, Social Justice & Empowerment and Women & Child Development.

Chhavni COVID: Yodha Sanrakshan Yojana

- Raksha Mantri launched the 'Chhavni COVID: Yodha Sanrakshan Yojana', a group life insurance scheme through Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), which will cover more than 10,000 employees in all 62 Cantonment Boards in event of any unfortunate fatal calamity with an insurance cover of Rs five lakhs each.
- The Scheme will benefit permanent and contractual employees including doctors, paramedics and sanitation staff.

Know! about Cantonment Boards

- It is a civic administration body in India under control of the Ministry of Defence
- Urban Self Governance of the Cantonments and the Housing Accommodation is the subject matter of the Union of India.
- There are 62 Cantonments in the country which have been notified under the Cantonments Act, 1924 (succeeded by the Cantonments Act, 2006).

- The overall municipal administration of the notified Cantonments is the function of the Cantonment Boards which are democratic bodies.
- The Station Commander of the Cantonment is the ex-officio President of the Board
- The Board has equal representation of the elected and nominated/ex-officio members to balance the official representation with the democratic composition.
- The term of office of a member of a board is five years.
- A cantonment board consists of eight elected members, three nominated military members, three ex-officio members (station commander, garrison engineer and senior executive medical officer), and one representative of the district magistrate.
- Cantonment areas are primarily meant to accommodate the military population and their installations.
- Cantonments are different from the Military Stations in that the Military Stations are purely meant for the use and accommodation of the armed forces and these are established under an executive order whereas the Cantonments are areas which comprise of both military and civil population.
- *Directorate General, Defence Estates* (*DGDE*) is an Inter Services Organisation of the Ministry of Defence which directly controls the Cantonment Administration.
- The Directorate General Defence Estates (*DGDE*), monitors all 62 cantonments in the country
- The cantonment board takes care of **mandatory duties such as provision** of public health, water supply, sanitation, primary education, and street lighting etc.
- As the resources are owned by government of India, it **can't levy any tax.** Government of India provides the financial assistance.

Cantonments are divided into four categories, namely

- Category I – population exceeds fifty thousand
- Category II – population exceeds ten thousand, but does not exceed fifty thousand
- Category III – population exceeds two thousand five hundred, but does not exceed ten thousand
- Category IV – population does not exceed two thousand five hundred.

Additional info

- In India's developmental plan exercise we have two types of schemes viz; central sector and centrally sponsored scheme.

Central sector schemes

- Under Central sector schemes, it is 100% funded by the Union government and implemented by the Central Government machinery.
- Central sector schemes are mainly formulated on subjects from the Union List.
- Central Ministries also implement some schemes directly in States/UTs which are called Central Sector Schemes but resources under these Schemes are not generally transferred to States.

Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)

- Under Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) a certain percentage of the funding is borne by the States in the ratio of 50:50, 70:30, 75:25 or 90:10 and the implementation is by the State Governments.
- Centrally Sponsored Schemes are formulated in subjects from the State List to encourage States to prioritise in areas that require more attention.

NITI Aayog: NITI Aayog releases report on Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2020

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2020 + GS II – government policies and interventions

What's the NEWS

- NITI Aayog in partnership with the Institute of Competitiveness released the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2020
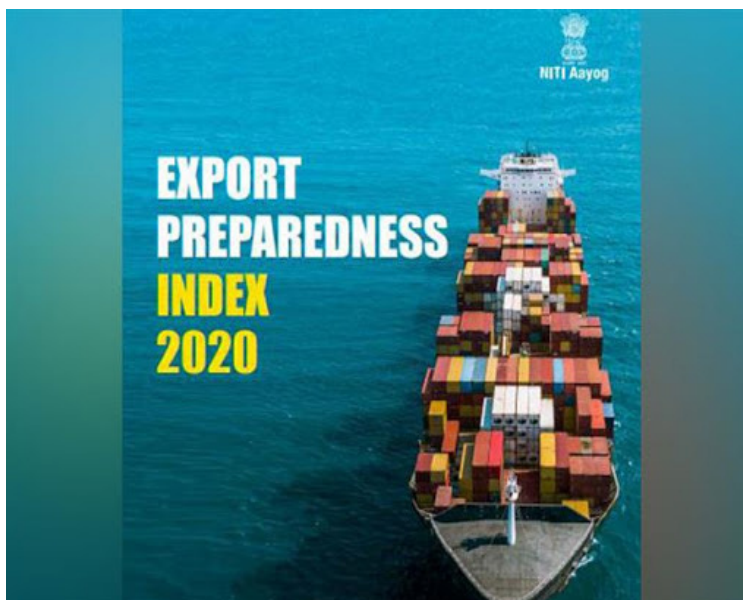
- Objective – To examine export preparedness and performance of Indian states
- EPI intends to identify challenges and opportunities; enhance the effectiveness of government policies; and encourage a facilitative regulatory framework.

Know! about EPI

- The Export Preparedness Index is a data-driven effort to identify the core areas crucial for export promotion at the sub-national level.
- The final framework of the EPI was based on essential feedback from states, UTs and organizations **like EXIM Bank, IIFT and DGCIS.**
- The data has been primarily provided by state governments.
- For some of the indicators, RBI, DGCIS and Central ministries were consulted.

The structure of the EPI includes 4 pillars –

- Policy; Business Ecosystem; Export Ecosystem; Export Performance –

and 11 sub-pillars –

- Export Promotion Policy; Institutional Framework; Business Environment; Infrastructure; Transport Connectivity; Access to Finance; Export Infrastructure; Trade Support; R&D Infrastructure; Export Diversification; and Growth Orientation.

What's the need of EPI

- The Indian economy holds immense potential to become a strong exporter on the world stage.
- To realize this potential, it is crucial that India turns to its states and union territories and makes them active participants in the country's export efforts.
- The Export Preparedness Index 2020 evaluates states' potentials and capacities.

Export Preparedness Index 2020 edition highlights

- Most Indian states performed well on average across the sub-pillars of Exports Diversification, Transport Connectivity, and Infrastructure.
- The average score of Indian states in these three sub-pillars was above 50%.
- Most of the Coastal States are the best performers.
- Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu occupy the top three ranks, respectively.
- In the landlocked states, Rajasthan has performed the best, followed by Telangana and Haryana.
- Among the Himalayan states, Uttarakhand is the highest, followed by Tripura and Himachal Pradesh.
- Across the Union Territories, Delhi has performed the best, followed by Goa and Chandigarh.

- Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand are two landlocked states that had initiated several measures to promote exports.
- Many northeastern states under the Growth Orientation sub-pillar were able to export more by focusing on their indigenous product baskets.

Based on the findings of the report, export promotion in India faces three fundamental challenges:

➢ intra- and inter-regional disparities in export infrastructure
➢ poor trade support and growth orientation among states
➢ poor R&D infrastructure to promote complex and unique exports.

Way Forward

There is a need to emphasize on key strategies to address these challenges:

➢ a joint development of export infrastructure
➢ strengthening industry-academia linkages
➢ creating state-level engagements for economic diplomacy.
➢ revamped designs and standards for local products

Governance: UMANG app to be available to citizens through the network of 3.75 lakh CSCs

Relevance IN – Prelims (about UMANG app +Common Service Center) + Mains (GS II e-governance + GS III financial inclusion)

What's the NEWS

- The National e-Governance Division (NeGD), Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY) has signed an MOU with CSC (Common Service Center) e Governance Services India Limited to facilitate delivery of UMANG services at CSCs
- The CSC operators **Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs)** will enable citizens to avail e-Governance services of 140 Departments through the UMANG App.
- This will benefit those citizens who either do not have access to smartphones or are not comfortable accessing App based e services on their own.

Know! about CSCs

- Common Services Centres or CSCs, set up under the CSC Scheme of MeitY, are a strategic cornerstone of the Digital India programme and key access points for delivery of various electronic services to villages in India.

Know! about UMANG

- UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-Age Governance) is the common unified platform for delivery of services of various Government Departments through the mobile platform.
- This invaluable synergy between UMANG and CSCs, will make available over 1000+services from 140 departments on the UMANG platform to CSCs.
- This will be of great advantage to the 140 departments connected on UMANG platform too, as their services will be delivered in an assisted mode now, in one go, without incurring any cost.
- UMANG launched in 2017 was developed by National e-Governance Division (NeGD), Ministry of Electronics & IT.
- The mobile app attained four illustrious awards including '**Best m-Government service**' award at the **6**th **World Government Summit held at Dubai, UAE in** Feb 2018.
- The aim to develop UMANG has been to facilitate ease of access to major Government services for citizens from a single mobile app.

- Presently 1,011 services (294 from Central, 441 from State departments, 276 from Bill payments), from 70 Central departments, 71 State departments from 26 States are available on UMANG

Know! more about CSCs

- Common Services Centre (CSC) programme is an initiative of the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY)
- CSCs are the access points for delivery of various electronic services to villages in India, thereby contributing to a digitally and financially inclusive society.
- CSC e-Governance Services India Limited is a Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC SPV) incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), to monitor the implementation of the Common Services Centers Scheme.
- It provides a centralized collaborative framework for delivery of services to citizens through CSCs, besides ensuring systemic viability and sustainability of the scheme.
- The CSCs would provide high quality and cost-effective video, voice and data content and services, in the areas of e-governance, education, health, telemedicine, entertainment as well as other private services.

NITI Aayog: NITI Aayog launched Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)–Transport Initiative for Asia (TIA) India

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)–Transport Initiative for Asia (TIA) + Mains (GS III Infrastructure development – Energy Sector + Environment conservation+ GS II government policies and interventions)

What's the NEWS

- NITI Aayog launched the India Component of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)–Transport Initiative for Asia (TIA)
- The event informed the transport, energy, and climate stakeholders in India about planned project activities for the upcoming year.

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)–Transport Initiative for Asia (TIA)

- With the aim to promote a comprehensive approach **to decarbonize transport in India, Vietnam, and China,** NDC–TIA is a joint programme, supported by the **International Climate Initiative (IKI)** of the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and implemented by a consortium of seven organisations, namely:

  1. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

  2. International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT)

  3. World Resources Institute (WRI)

  4. International Transport Forum (ITF)

  5. Agora Verkehrswende (AGORA)

  6. Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) Foundation

  7. Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century e.V. (REN21)

- The India Component is implemented by **six consortium organisations, all except SLoCaT.**

- On behalf of the Government of India, NITI Aayog, the country's premier policy think tank, will be the implementing partner.

Know! more about NDC-TIA

- The NDC-TIA programme has a **duration of 4 years** and will allow India and other partner countries to achieve accountable long-term targets by making a sectoral contribution through various interventions, coordinated with a large number of stakeholders in the domain.

- This will contribute towards achieving their NDCs and increasing their ambition in the transport sector of 2025 NDCs.

- the programme intends to support the development of policies and regulations to promote electric vehicle charging infrastructure uptake and smooth widescale adoption of EVs in India.

  The NDC–TIA India Component will focus on

  ➢ establishing a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform for decarbonizing transport in India

  ➢ strengthening GHG and transport modelling capacities,

  ➢ providing technical support on GHG emission reduction measures,

  ➢ financing climate actions in transport,

  ➢ offering policy recommendations on electric vehicle (EV) demand

  ➢ coupling of transport and energy sectors and receiving cross-sectoral expertise from ministries, international development agencies, think tanks, public and private organisations.

Governance: UMANG app to be available to citizens through the network of 3.75 lakh CSCs

Relevance IN – Prelims (about UMANG app +Common Service Center) + Mains (GS II e-governance + GS III financial inclusion)

What's the NEWS

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- This will benefit those citizens who either do not have access to smartphones or are not comfortable accessing App based e services on their own.

Know! about CSCs

- Common Services Centres or CSCs, set up under the CSC Scheme of MeitY, are a strategic cornerstone of the Digital India programme and key access points for delivery of various electronic services to villages in India.

Know! about UMANG

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- Common Services Centre (CSC) programme is an initiative of the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY)

- CSCs are the access points for delivery of various electronic services to villages in India, thereby contributing to a digitally and financially inclusive society.

- CSC e-Governance Services India Limited is a Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC SPV) incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), to monitor the implementation of the Common Services Centers Scheme.

- It provides a centralized collaborative framework for delivery of services to citizens through CSCs, besides ensuring systemic viability and sustainability of the scheme.

- The CSCs would provide high quality and cost-effective video, voice and data content and services, in the areas of e-governance, education, health, telemedicine, entertainment as well as other private services.

National: Chunauti- Next Generation Start-up Challenge Contest

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the objective of Chunauti + about National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology) + Mains (GSII Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology launched "Chunauti"- Next Generation Startup Challenge Contest **to boost startups and software products with special focus on Tier-II towns** of India.

Know! all about Chunauti

- It aims to identify around **300 startups** working in identified areas and provide them **seed fund of upto Rs. 25 Lakh** and other facilities

- The government has earmarked a budget of Rs. 95.03 Crore over a period of three years for this programme.
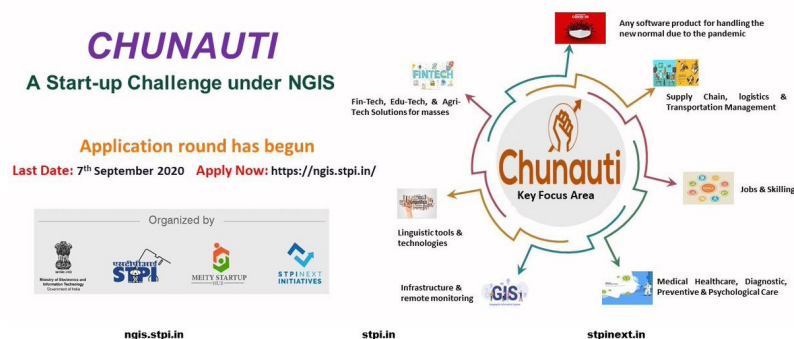
Under this challenge the Ministry of Electronics and IT will invite startups in the following areas of work:

1. Edu-Tech, Agri-Tech & Fin-Tech Solutions for masses
2. Supply Chain, Logistics & Transportation Management
3. Infrastructure & Remote monitoring
4. Medical Healthcare, Diagnostic, Preventive & Psychological Care
5. Jobs & Skilling, Linguistic tools & technologies

- The startups selected through **Chunauti** will be provided various support from the Government through **Software Technology Parks of India centers across India.**
- They will get incubation facilities, mentorship, security testing facilities, access to venture capitalist funding, industry connect as well as advisories in legal, Human Resource (HR), IPR and Patent matters.
- Seed fund of upto Rs. 25 Lakh and cloud credits from leading cloud service providers.
- Start-ups who are in the i**deation stage may be selected under the pre-incubation programme** & mentored for up-to six months to evolve their business plan & solution around the proposed idea.
- Each intern (start-up under pre-incubation) will be paid Rs. 10,000/- per month upto a period of 6 months.

National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT)

- Union Minister also **laid foundation stone of the digital training and skilling center** of National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) at Muzaffarpur in Bihar.
- This center will be developed by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India at a cost of Rs. 9.17 Crore.
- The government of Bihar has allocated one acre of land for this institution.
- This center will be equipped with the state of the art training facility with a digital laboratory.
- Different courses such as O level, CCC, BCC, Programming and multimedia training will be offered from this center.

Governance: Online Dashboard of PM SVANidhi launched

Relevance IN – Prelims (about PM SVANidhi + Mains (GS II Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications)

What's the NEWS

- Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry launched the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) online dashboard

Know! more about the progress of PM SVANidhi

- The online dashboard is dynamic, interactive and would provide a one stop solution to all stakeholders looking for **information and tracking monitoring of progress of PM SVANidhi up to city level.**
- Since the commencement of online submission of applications on PM SVANidhi portal on 2nd July 2020, more than 7.15 lakh applications have been received and over 1.70 lakh have been sanctioned in different States and UTs.

Know! about PM SVANidhi

- It was launched by the Ministry on June 01, 2020, for providing affordable working capital loan to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to Covid-19 lockdown.

- This scheme **targets to benefit over 50 lakh Street Vend**ors who had been vending on or before 24 March, 2020, in urban areas including those from surrounding peri-urban/rural areas.

- Under the Scheme, the vendors can avail **a working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000,** which is repayable in monthly instalments in the tenure of one year.

- On timely/ early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy @ 7% per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer on quarterly basis. There will be no penalty on early repayment of loan.

Social Issues: Eklavya Model Residential School teacher selected for National Award to Teachers2020

Relevance IN – Prelims (about EMRA + about NTA 2020) – Mains (GSII Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the schemes

What's the NEWS

- **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** established under Ministry of Tribal Affairs witnessed its first NAT Awardee

- Union Ministry of Education (formerly Ministry of Human Resource Development), Department of School Education & Literacy constituted an **Independent Jury at National Level** to bestow the National Award to Teachers (NAT) for the year 2020.

- In the history of Eklavya, it is the first time an EMRS teacher, has been selected for National Award.

Know! about Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)

- EMRS started in the year 1997-98 to impart quality education to ST children **in remote areas** in order to enable them to avail of opportunities in high and professional educational courses and get employment in various sectors.

- Across the country, as per census 2011 figures, there are 564 such sub-districts out of which there is an EMRS in 102 sub-districts.

- As per revised 2018 EMRS Scheme, **every block with more than 50% ST** population and at least 20,000 tribal persons, will have an Eklavya Model Residential School by the year 2022.

- These schools will be **on par with Navodaya Vidyalayas** and will have special facilities for **preserving local art and culture** besides providing training in sports and skill development.

Miscellaneous: National GIS-enabled land bank system launched

Relevance IN – Prelims (about GIS-enabled land bank system and about GIS) + Mains (GS II Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance-applications)

What's the NEWS

- Commerce and Industry Minister launched the national GIS-enabled land bank system, which will help **investors to get real-time information about the availability of industrial land and resources.**
- The system is being developed by **integrating the Industrial Information System (IIS) with state GIS (Geographic Information System).**
- The project has been launched for six states.
- This is a prototype only and will be developed further with inputs from states to make it an effective and transparent mechanism for land identification as well as procurement.
- The IIS portal is a GIS-enabled database of industrial areas/clusters across the states.
- More than 3,300 industrial parks across 31 states/UTs covering about 4,75,000 hectare land have been mapped on the system.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

- It store, analyze and visualize data for geographic positions on Earth's surface.
- GIS is a computer-based tool that examines spatial relationships, patterns and trends.
- By connecting geography with data, GIS better understands data using a geographic context.

The 4 main ideas of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are:

- Create geographic data.
- Manage it in a database.
- Analyze and find patterns.
- Visualize it on a map.

Great Andamanese tribe

Relevance IN – Prelims (about PVTGs and different tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands)

What's the NEWS

- At least five members of the **Great Andamanese tribe** have tested positive for Covid-19
- Earlier this month, it was reported that five welfare staff working with the Jarawa tribe had tested positive for Covid-19.
- **Survival International** said concern was growing for the safety of other tribes on the islands, including the Jarawa and the uncontacted Sentinelese.

Know! more about these tribes

Great Andamanese

- The Great Andamanese are a small group of just over 50 survivors, down from more than 5000 when the British colonised the islands in the 1850s.
- They are classified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).
- They speak Jeru dialect among themselves

Jarawa

- The Jarawa are a nomadic hunter-gatherer tribe, who have only had friendly contact with settlers neighbouring their territory since 1998.
- They live in parts of South Andaman and Middle Andaman Islands, and their present numbers are estimated at between 250–400 individuals.

Sentinelese

- The uncontacted Sentinelese-- the most isolated tribe in the world-- are extremely vulnerable to diseases from outsiders

*The five PVTGS residing in Andamans are **Great Andamanese, Jarwas, Onges, Shompens and North Sentinelese.***

Know! about PVTGs

- 75 tribal groups have been categorized by **Ministry of Home Affairs** as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG)s.
- PVTGs reside in 18 States and UT of A&N Islands.
- **The Ministry of Tribal Affairs implements the Scheme** of "Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)" exclusively for them.
- Under the scheme, Conservation-cum-Development (CCD)/Annual Plans are to be prepared by each State/UT for their PVTGs based on their need assessment, which are then appraised and approved by the Project Appraisal Committee of the Ministry.

Criteria for identification of PVTGs

- Pre-agricultural level of technology
- Low level of literacy
- Economic backwardness and
- declining or stagnant population.

Protection Needed

Six tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands – the Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompens – have been notified as Scheduled Tribes

All except the Nicobarese are recognised as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups

The commission feels the videos outrage the modesty of the Jarawas without their knowledge

It has ordered the videos be taken off and no such content be posted online in future

The Jarawas are **480** in number at present and inhabit the Middle and South Andaman Islands

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has taken a strong exception to videos posted on YouTube and other social media platforms

Know! more about PVTGs

- In 1973, the **Dhebar Commission** created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.
- In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- In India, tribal population makes up for 8.6% of the total population. Tribal people live in about 15% of the geographical area of the country.
- The PVTG of Sahariyas has the highest population of 4,50,217, while the PVTGs of Sentinelets and Andamanese has a very small population of 39 and 43, respectively.

Survival International

- Survival International is a human rights organisation formed in 1969 that campaigns for the rights of indigenous and/or tribal peoples and uncontacted peoples.
- The organisation's campaigns generally focus on tribal peoples' desires to keep their ancestral lands.

Miscellaneous: National GIS-enabled land bank system launched

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Ease of Investment

INDIA LAUNCHES PORTAL ON LAND BANK

LAUNCH IN 6 STATES, others likely by year-end

One-stop repository to have plot info, satellite view of terrain

Heat maps on forests, other natural resources available

Info on 3,300 industrial parks, covering about **4.75 lakh** hectare land

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International Relations: Exercise Kavkaz 2020

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Exercise Kavkaz 2020 + past exercises + SCO + RATS) + GS II (Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

What's the NEWS

- **India turned down Russia's invitation** to participate in next month's multilateral defence exercise, which is scheduled to be held in southern Russia between September 15 and 27.
- In the response communicated to Russia, New Delhi cited Covid-19 as the official reason **to skip 'Exercise Kavkaz 2020'.**

Know! more about the recent developments

- The move comes in the backdrop of a border standoff with China in eastern Ladakh, which has been going on since the last three-and-half months.
- China has confirmed its participation, Pakistan is also likely to send its troops for the exercise.
- India had earlier planned to send a company-level strength of approximately 180 troops from an infantry battalion, 40 personnel of the Air Force, and two Navy officers as observers.

Past Exercises

- **In 2018, Exercise Vostok** saw the participation of China and Mongolia.
- **Exercise Tsentr** last year had the participation of India, Pakistan and all Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member-nations.

- India had participated in SCO peace mission exercise in 2018, and in 2019, for the first time, was involved in a strategic command and staff exercise as part of Exercise Tsentr.

Know! about Exercise KavKaz

- The aim of the exercise is to "provide real-time training to counter international terrorism in the Northern and Caucasus region", and the setting "will involve both offensive and defensive operations against international terror

About SCO and India's participation in these drills

- SCO is a eight-member economic and security bloc and India and Pakistan were admitted as full members back in 2017.

- It is a **permanent intergovernmental international** organisation founded in 2001 with its secretariat based in Beijing, China.

- The founding members of this grouping include **China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.**

- The grouping has been having multilateral drills and has **developed Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS).**

About RATS

- It is a permanent organ of the SCO and regarded as very important in the counterterrorism operations by the member countries and has its headquarters based in Tashkent.

- Security officials of all the eight countries sit at the **RATS Headquarters in Tashkent.**

- In fight against terrorism, extremism and separatism, RATS plays a very critical role, as it gives a chance to all to test their intelligence gathering and exchange; technology complement mechanisms between the members states of SCO.

GENERAL STUDIES III

Science & Technology Economic Developments, Biodiversity, Environment, Internal Security and Disaster management

Career Launcher IAS

Space Awareness: NASA launches Mars rover Perseverance

Relevance IN – Prelims (about NASA's mission on MARS and about other MARS missions + about rover Perseverance

What's the NEWS

- The biggest, most sophisticated Mars rover (Perseverance) ever built blasted off for the red planet **to bring the first Martian rock samples back to Earth** to be analysed for evidence of ancient life.

Know! more about the mission

- The plutonium-powered, six-wheeled rover will drill down and collect tiny geological specimens that will be brought home in about 2031 in a sort of interplanetary relay race involving multiple spacecraft and countries.
- In addition to addressing the life-on-Mars question, the mission will yield lessons that could pave the way for the arrival of astronauts as early as the 2030s.
- The U.S., the only country to safely put a spacecraft on Mars, is seeking its ninth successful landing on the planet, which has proved to be the Bermuda Triangle of space exploration, with more than half of the world's missions there burning up, crashing or otherwise ending in failure.
- The opportunity to fly between Earth and Mars comes around only once every 26 months when the planets are on the same side of the sun and about as close as they can get.
- If all goes well, the rover will descend to the Martian surface on February 18, 2021, in what NASA calls seven minutes of terror, in which the craft goes from 12,000 mph (19,300 kph) to a complete stop, with no human intervention whatsoever.

Know! what the rover (Perseverance) will do after landing

- Perseverance will aim for treacherous unexplored territory
- It also will release a mini helicopter that will attempt the first powered flight on another planet
- It includes equipment for extracting oxygen from Mars' thin carbon-dioxide atmosphere.

Other future space mission

- NASA and the European Space Agency are launching a **dune buggy** in 2026 to fetch the rock samples, along with a rocket ship that will put the specimens into orbit around Mars. Then another spacecraft will capture the orbiting samples and bring them home.
- Two other NASA landers are also operating on Mars — **2018's InSight and 2012's Curiosity rover.**
- Six other spacecraft are exploring the planet from orbit: three from the U.S., two from Europe and one from India.
- China is sending both a rover an orbiter.
- The UAE, a newcomer to outer space, has an orbiter en route.

Science & Technology: First Pan India 1000 Genome sequencing of SARS- CoV-2

Relevance IN – Prelims (about genome sequencing + about COVID-19 Biorepositories + about GISAID) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of science and technology)

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Science & Technology, announced **the successful completion of PAN-India 1000 Genome sequencing of SARS- CoV-2**
- The S&T Minister **also launched and dedicated to the nation the largest network of five dedicated COVID-19 Biorepositories established by Department of Biotechnology**

Know! about genome sequencing of SARS-CoV-2

- The Department of Biotechnology had launched a **Pan India 1000 SARS--CoV-2 RNA Genome Sequencing programme** in May this year to be done by Autonomous Institutes of DBT, collaborating with national laboratories and clinical organizations.
- The Consortium has achieved its initial goal of completing the sequencing of **1000 SARS-CoV-2 genomes** from nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs collected from individuals testing positive for COVID19 by Real Time PCR.
- The consortium coordinated by National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG-Kalyani), West Bengal and Five other National clusters
- The sequence data will soon be released in Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) for use by researchers across the Globe
- The information in the database will improve our understanding on how the virus is spreading, ultimately helping to interrupt the transmission chains, prevent new cases of infection, and provide impetus to research on intervention measures

Know! about COVID-19 Biorepositories

- The main purpose of these biorepositories are archival of inactivated virus and clinical samples, including naso-oropharyngeal swabs, stool, urine, saliva, serum, plasma, PBMC and Serum.
- These bio-repositories will use the clinical samples for R&D and are authorised to share the samples with academia, industry and commercial entities involved in development of diagnostics, therapeutics, vaccines, etc.

Genome

- It is an organism's complete set of DNA, including all of its genes.
- Each genome contains all of the information needed to build and maintain that organism.

Genome sequence

- It is the unique code of genetic material of any organism
- Every organism has a unique genome sequence.
- It determines the characteristic of the organism.
- Whole genome sequencing is the process of determining the complete DNA sequence of an organism's genome at a single time.
- Laboratories in various countries have been isolating and sharing the genome sequences of the virus on an international platform.

Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data

- The GISAID platform was launched on the occasion of the Sixty-first World Health Assembly in May 2008.
- GISAID provides a publicly accessible database designed by scientist for scientist, to improve the sharing of influenza data.
- **In 2010 the Federal Republic of Germany became the official host of the GISAID platform** and EpiFlu™ database providing sustainability of the platform and stability through its **public-private-partnership with the GISAID Initiative to this day.**
- In 2013 **the European Commission** recognized GISAID as a research organization and partner in the **PREDEMICS consortium,** a project on the Preparedness, Prediction and the Prevention of Emerging Zoonotic Viruses with Pandemic Potential using multidisciplinary approaches.
- Since its launch GISAID plays an essential role in the sharing of data among the WHO Collaborating Centers

and National Influenza Centers for the bi-annual influenza vaccine virus recommendations by the **WHO Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS).**

- The GISAID Initiative promotes the rapid sharing of data from all influenza viruses and the coronavirus causing COVID-19.
- This includes genetic sequence and related clinical and epidemiological data, to help researchers understand how viruses evolve and spread during epidemics and pandemics.
- The Initiative ensures that **open access to data in GISAID is provided free-of-charge to all individuals** that agreed to identify themselves and agreed to uphold the GISAID sharing mechanism governed through its Database Access
- Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak and the identification of the pandemic virus, laboratories around the world are generating viral genome sequence data with unprecedented speed, enabling real-time progress in the understanding of the new disease and in the research and development of candidate medical countermeasures.
- Sequence data are essential to design and evaluate diagnostic tests, to track and trace the ongoing outbreak, and to identify potential intervention options.

Science and Technology: Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan 2020-21

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan + Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA) +about role of NCERT) + Mains (GS III Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life + GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

What's the NEWS
- Health and Family Welfare Minister launched 'Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan, 2020-21.

Know! about the initiative
- This initiative is a national programme for popularizing science among school students of Class 6th to 11th.
- It is an initiative of **Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA),** in collaboration with **Vigyan Prasar** and **National Council of Educational Research and Training** (NCERT).
- It was designed to identify the bright minds with a scientific aptitude among the student community.
- This is a platform to identify the talent in the field of science and to promote the scientific acumen among the students.

Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA)
- Vijnana Bharati or VIBHA, previously known as "Swadeshi Science Movement" is a Non-profit organisation, working for science popularization & implementation of modern technology & ancient sciences in India.
- It was founded by the eminent scientists of Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru led by Prof. K.I. Vasu.
- It is a dynamic Science Movement with Swadeshi Spirit interlinking traditional and modern sciences on one hand, and natural and spiritual sciences on the other hand, adapted to national needs.
- It is a national movement for the propagation and popularization of Science & Technology among students and masses.

Vigyan Prasar (VP)
- It is an **autonomous organization** under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India.
- The principal objective of VP is to serve India's science popularization agenda.
- This is achieved through several strategically important two – way stakeholder specific approaches to communicate about principles and practice of science and technology and implications for development and quality of life.

NCERT
- National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT) is an organization set up by the Government of India in the year **1961** to assist and advise the central and state governments on academic matters related to school education.

- The major objectives of NCERT and its constituent units are to: undertake, promote and coordinate research in areas related to school education; prepare and publish model textbooks, supplementary material, newsletters, and journals and develop educational kits, multimedia digital materials, etc.

Space Awareness: SpaceX capsule and NASA crew make 1st splashdown in 45 years

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the space X dragon capsule and mission objective + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of space)

What's the NEWS

- Two NASA astronauts returned to Earth, their capsule parachuting into the Gulf of Mexico to close out an unprecedented test flight by Elon Musk's SpaceX company.
- It was the first splashdown by US astronauts in 45 years, with the first commercially built and operated spacecraft to carry people to and from orbit.
- The return clears the way for another SpaceX crew launch as early as next month and possible tourist flights next year.

Know! more about the mission

- Test pilots Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken r**ode the SpaceX Dragon capsule** back to Earth less than a day after departing the International Space Station and two months after blasting off from Florida.
- SpaceX made history with this mission, which launched May 30 from NASA's Kennedy Space Center.
- It was the **first time a private company launched people into orbit** and also the first launch of NASA astronauts from home turf in nearly a decade.
- SpaceX needs six weeks to inspect the capsule before launching the next crew around the end of September. This next mission of four astronauts will spend a full six months aboard the space station.

Government Schemes: PLI Scheme to herald a new era in mobile phone and electronic components manufacturing

Relevance IN – Prelims (about. PLI + SPECS + EMC2.0 Schemes) + Mains (GS III Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth + GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

What's the NEWS

- Conclusion of application window under the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI)
- PLI scheme has been huge success in terms of the applications received from Global as well as Domestic Mobile Phone manufacturing companies and electronic components manufacturers.

Know! about PLI

- Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing was notified on 1st April, 2020.
- PLI Scheme extends an incentive of 4% to 6% on incremental sales (over base year) of goods under target segments that are manufactured in India to eligible companies, for a period of five years subsequent to the base year (FY2019-20).
- The scheme was open for filing applications till 31.07.2020. Incentives are applicable under the scheme from 01.08.2020.
- A total of **22** companies have filed their application under the PLI Scheme.

Know! the steps taken by the government to promote Electronic manufacturing

- In order to position India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) and push further the vision of the National Policy on Electronics (NPE) 2019, three schemes namely the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI), Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS) and Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters Scheme (EMC 2.0) have been notified.
- To facilitate large-scale manufacturing, development of a supply chain ecosystem, and building of new manufacturing clusters in the country, each electronic manufacturing scheme has been carefully constructed to incentivize the electronics manufacturing industry.

Schemes for Electronics Manufacturing

Scheme 1: Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing

- The Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing proposes a financial incentive to boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in the electronics value chain including mobile phones, electronic components and ATMP units.
- Production Linked Incentives of up to INR 40,951 crores will be awarded over a period of 5 years.
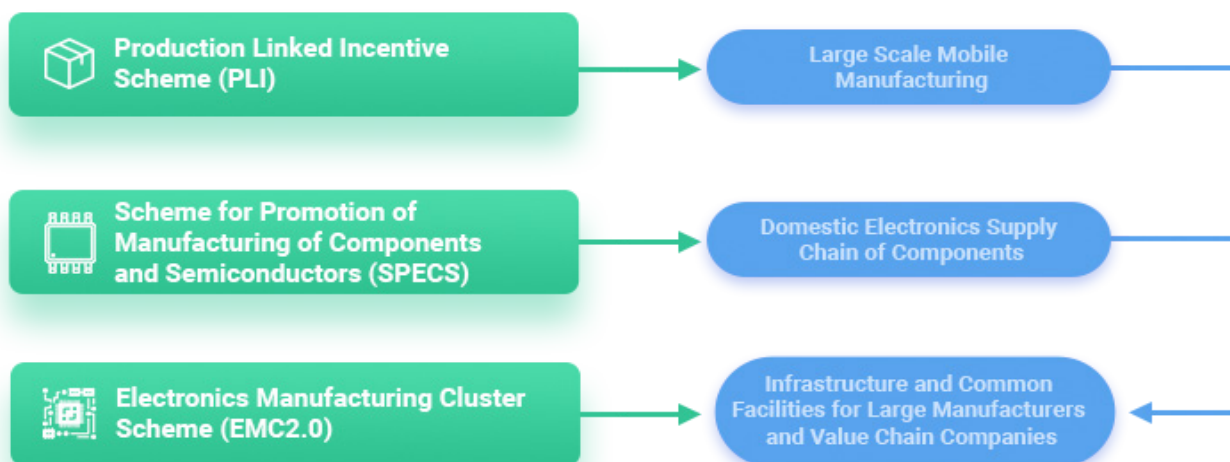
Scheme 2: Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS)

- The Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS) aims to strengthen the manufacturing ecosystem for electronic components and semiconductors.
- Target manufacturing of electronic components and semiconductors through the scheme will help meet domestic demand, increase value addition and promote employment opportunities in this sector.
- Incentives of up to INR 3,285 crore will be awarded under the Scheme over a period of 8 years.

Scheme 3: Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters Scheme (EMC 2.0)

- The Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0) Scheme seeks to strengthen the infrastructure base for the electronics industry and deepen the electronics value chain in India.

- The development of industry-specific facilities like Common Facility Centers, Ready Built Factory, Sheds/ Plug and Play facilities will not only strengthen supply chain responsiveness and promote the consolidation of suppliers but also decrease time-to-market and lower logistics costs.
- EMC 2.0, therefore, provides financial incentives for creating quality infrastructure as well as common facilities and amenities for electronics manufacturers.
- Financial Incentives of up to INR 3,762 Crore will be disbursed over a period of 8 years.

Policies/Acts/Drafts: BCAS issues security guidelines for drone operating systems

Relevance IN – Prelims (about guidelines issued by BCAS + about Drone Regulations 1.0) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of space + GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation)

What's the NEWS
- Aviation security regulator Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has issued guidelines for drone operating systems

Know! the guidelines issued by BCAS (highlights)
- The BCAS has listed out rules that should be followed for cyber security, storage facility, training and background check of staff for drone operating systems or remotely piloted aircraft systems.
- **A remotely piloted aircraft (RPA)**, its associated remote pilot station, its required command and control links and any other components constitute **a remotely piloted aircraft system (RPAS).**
- The capacity to retain recording of minimum 30 days shall be in place for all categories of RPAs except for mini and micro
- An RPA or drone is in nano or mini category if it has weight less than 250 grams.
- If its weight is between 250 grams and 2 kg, it is in the micro category.
- Each RPA and RPAS operator must establish, implement and maintain a security programme, based on the aforementioned guidelines, and it must be submitted to BCAS before its operation
- The operator of RPAS must obtain relevant permissions from the local administration and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) before operating the RPAS,
- The drone operator must ensure that all of its staff are provided one-day aviation security awareness training online as recommended by BCAS
- On June 5, the ministry had issued draft rules for manufacturing and use of drones in the country wherein it has proposed that an authorised drone manufacturer or importer can sell its devices only to an individual or entity approved by the DGCA.

Connect to the past

Drone Regulations 1.0.
- The Civil Aviation Ministry came up with India's first policy to regulate sales, purchase and use of drones.
- Named as Drone Regulations 1.0, it provides guidelines and has provision for stricter penalties under various sections of IPC.
- India has opted for an all-digital process for registering and operating drones
- Instead of simply digitizing a paper-based process for registering and operating drones, India has formulated an all-digital process.
- The Digital Sky Platform is the first-of-its-kind national **unmanned traffic management (UTM)** platform that implements "**no permission, no takeoff**" (NPNT)
- Users will be required to do a one-time registration of their drones, pilots and owners. For every flight (exempted for the nano category), users will be required to ask for permission to fly on a mobile app and an automated process permits or denies the request instantly.

Decoding Drones: India's New UAV/ RPA Policy Explained
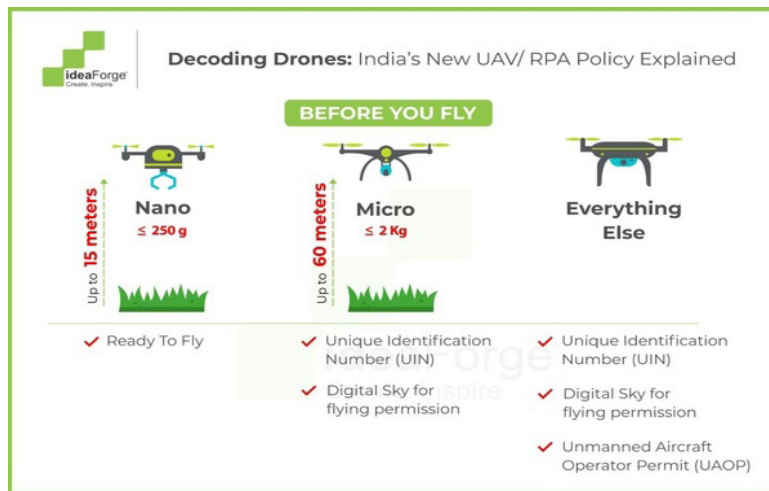
- To prevent unauthorized flights and to ensure public safety, any drone without a digital permit to fly will simply not be able to takeoff.
- The UTM operates as a traffic regulator in the drone airspace and coordinates closely with the defense and civilian air traffic controllers (ATCs) to ensure that drones remain on the approved flight paths

Drone Regulations 1.0. (other highlights)

- Drone Regulations 1.0 are intended to enable visual line-of-sight daytime-only and a maximum of 400 ft altitude operations
- The ministry has partitioned the air-space into three zones - Red Zone (flying not permitted), Yellow Zone (controlled airspace), and Green Zone (automatic permission).
- There are 5 categories of RPAS (drones) categorized by weight, namely nano, micro, small, medium and large.

Defence: MoD releases draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy 2020

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the DPEPP 2020 highlights). + Mains (GS III security challenges + GS II government policies and interventions)

What's the NEWS

- In order to provide impetus to self-reliance in defence manufacturing and to position India amongst the leading countries of the world in defence and aerospace sectors, Ministry of Defence (MoD) has formulated a draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy 2020 (DPEPP 2020).
- The DPEPP 2020 is envisaged as overarching guiding document of MoD to provide a focused, structured and significant **thrust to defence production capabilities** of the country for self-reliance and exports.

The policy has laid out following goals and objectives:

- To achieve a turnover of Rs 1,75,000 Crores (US$ 25 Bn) including export of Rs 35,000 Crore (US$ 5 Billion) in Aerospace and Defence goods and services by 2025.
- To develop a dynamic, robust and competitive Defence industry, including Aerospace and Naval Shipbuilding industry to cater to the needs of Armed forces with quality products.
- To reduce dependence on imports and take forward "Make in India" initiatives through domestic design and development.
- To promote export of defence products and become part of the global defence value chains.
- To create an environment that encourages R&D, rewards innovation, creates Indian IP ownership and promotes a robust and self-reliant defence industry.

The Policy brings out multiple strategies under the following focus areas:

- Procurement Reforms
- Indigenization & Support to MSMEs/Startups

- Optimize Resource Allocation
- Investment Promotion, FDI & Ease of Doing Business
- Innovation and R&D
- DPSUs and OFB
- Quality Assurance & Testing Infrastructure
- Export Promotion

Disaster Management: Hydro-Meteorological Hazards Risk Reduction

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Hydro-Meteorological Hazards Risk Reduction + about Sendai framework) + Mains (GS III disaster management)

What's the NEWS

- National Institute of Disaster Management, Ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with India Meteorological Department organised a webinar series on **"Hydro-Meteorological Hazards Risk Reduction"**.
- The webinar series include four webinars focusing on issues apropos of *'Thunderstorms and Lightning'*, *'Cloudburst and Floods'*, *'Cyclones and Storm Surges'* and *'Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events'*.
- The webinar series exhorted on enhancing human capacity in terms of better understanding of Hydro-Meteorological Hazards Risk and effective collaborative actions, **by implementing Prime Minister's 10-point agenda and Sendai Framework** for Disaster Risk Reduction, for reducing the risk and enhancing the resilience of affected communities and surroundings.

Hydro-Meteorological disasters.

- **Hydrometeorological hazards** are caused by extreme **meteorological** and climate events, such as floods, droughts, hurricanes, tornadoes, landslides, or mudslides.

Sendai Framework

- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework) was the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda and provides Member States with concrete actions to protect development gains from the risk of disaster.
- The **Framework aims** to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries over the next 15 years.
- It recognizes that the **State has the primary rol**e to reduce disaster risk but that responsibility **should be shared with other stakeholders** including local government, the private sector and other stakeholders.
- The Sendai Framework is the successor instrument to the **Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015**: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.
- It is the outcome of stakeholder consultations initiated in March 2012 and inter-governmental negotiations held from July 2014 to March 2015, which were supported by the UNDRR upon the request of the UN General Assembly.
- UNDRR is tasked to support the implementation, follow-up and review of the Sendai Framework.

Science & Technology: Habitat Model for Efficiency and Comfort

Relevance IN – Prelims (shade smart +radiant cooling + National Building Code of India) + Mains (GS III infrastructure development + awareness in the field of science and technology)

What's the NEWS

- The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in partnership with the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India has developed **novel external shading solution for windows in residential and commercial buildings** under the project **Habitat Model for Efficiency and Comfort.**

Figure 1: Thermal parameters being measured during Comfort Audit of Radiant Cooled Buildings

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ShadeSmart

- The shading system named as "ShadeSmart" has been developed as an innovative and cost-effective solution for achieving indoor comfort with reduced electricity consumption in air conditioning and lighting.
- ShadeSmart changes its configuration depending upon the Sun's position.
- ShadeSmart is being commercialized, and efforts are being made to make ShadeSmart more affordable than air conditioning in small thermal zones next to external windows, especially in the residential sector.
- This technology will help to bring inside the buildings more daylight with less heat, thus making occupants comfortable and also more productive and healthy.

Radiant cooling

- Radiant Cooling, where cooling is achieved through radiant heat transfer, as against regular convective air conditioning is efficient and gives better quality of thermal comfort.
- The process to integrate radiant cooling in the National Building Code is being undertaken.
- Radiant cooled buildings have an extremely high potential of energy-saving (60-70%).
- Standard protocols for operation of radiant cooled buildings and adaptive thermal comfort standards for radiant cooled buildings in India will make it convenient for the masses to adopt radiant cooling technology.
- Radiant Cooling, which employs 100% fresh air supply, is expected to gain popularity and higher acceptance rates in the air-conditioning industry.
- Radiant cooling cools a floor or ceiling by absorbing the heat radiated from the rest of the room.
- When the floor is cooled, it is often referred to as radiant floor cooling; cooling the ceiling is usually done in homes with radiant panels.

Know! about NBC

- The National Building Code of India (NBC), a comprehensive building Code, is a national instrument providing guidelines for regulating the building construction activities across the country.
- It serves as a **Model Code for adoption by all agencies involved** in building construction works be they Public Works Departments, other government construction departments, local bodies or private construction agencies.
- The Code mainly contains administrative regulations, development control rules and general building requirements; fire safety requirements; stipulations regarding materials, structural design and construction (including safety); building and plumbing services; approach to sustainability; and asset and facility management.
- The Code was first published in 1970 at the instance of Planning Commission and then first revised in 1983.
- Thereafter three major amendments were issued to the 1983 version, two in 1987 and the third in 1997. The second revision of the Code was in 2005, to which two amendments were issued in 2015.
- The revised Code has been brought out in 2016 as **National Building Code of India 2016** reflecting the state-of-the-art and contemporary applicable international practices.

Know! about TERI - The Energy and Resources Institute

- It is a not-for-profit, policy research organization - working in the fields of energy, environment, and sustainable development
- Established in 1974, it was formerly known as the Tata Energy Research Institute.
- As the scope of its activities widened, it was renamed The Energy and Resources Institute in 2003.
- TERI's mission is to usher transitions to a cleaner and sustainable future through the conservation and efficient use of energy and other resources, and innovative ways of minimizing and reusing waste.

Agriculture: Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana

Relevance IN -Prelims (about Agri-entrepreneurship Development programme) + Mains (GS III)

What's the NEWS

- In order to contribute directly and indirectly to enhancing the income of farmers by providing opportunites to them and to provide employment to youth, **start-ups are being encouraged.**

Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana

- A component, Innovation and **Agri-entrepreneurship Development programme** has been launched under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana in order to **promote innovation and agripreneurship** by providing **financial support and nurturing the incubation ecosystem.**
- These start-ups are in various categories such as agro-processing, artificial intelligence, digital agriculture, farm mechanisation, waste to wealth, dairy, fisheries etc.
- Department of agriculture cooperation and family welfare (DAC&FW) has selected 5 Knowledge Partners (KPs) as Centres of Excellence.
- **24 RKVY-RAFTAAR** Agribusiness Incubators (R-ABIs) from across the country have also been appointed.
- These start-ups were trained for two months at 29 agribusiness incubation centres (KPs & RABIs) spread across India. These start-ups will lead to employment to youth.

The following are the components of this scheme:

- **Agripreneurship Orientation -** 2 months duration with a monthly stipend of Rs. 10,000/- per month. Mentorship is provided on financial, technical, IP issues etc.
- **Seed Stage Funding of R-ABI Incubate**es – Funding upto Rs. 25 lakhs (85% grant & 15% contribution from the incubatee).
- **Idea/Pre-Seed Stage Funding of Agripreneurs** – Funding up to Rs. 5 lakhs (90% grant and 10% contribution from the incubatee).

Know! about RKAY

Cabinet Decision November 1, 2017

CONTINUATION OF RASHTRIYA KRISHI VIKAS YOJANA (RKVY) AS RASHTRIYA KRISHI VIKAS YOJANA- REMUNERATIVE APPROACHES FOR AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED SECTOR

- Cabinet approves continuation of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) as Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana - Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied sector Rejuvenation (RKVY-RAFTAAR) for three years, i.e. 2017-'18 to 2019-'20
- Financial allocation: Rs. 15,722 crore
- Aim: Make farming a remunerative economic activity
- The scheme **will incentivize states in enhancing more allocation to Agriculture and Allied Sectors**
- Will also strengthen farmer's efforts through creation of agriculture infrastructure that help in supply of quality inputs, market facilities etc.
- Will further promote agri-entrepreneurship and support business models that maximize returns to farmers
- RKVY-RAFTAAR funds would be provided to the States as 60:40 grants between Centre and States (90:10 for North Eastern States and Himalayan States)

Food Processing: First Kisan Special Parcel Train flagged off

Relevance IN – Prelims (about KISAN RAIL and its objective) + Mains (GS III Food processing and related industries in India- scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.

What's the NEWS

- In the Union Budget 2020-21, Minister of Finance had made an announcement '**to build a seamless national cold supply chain** *for perishables, inclusive of milk, meat, and fish'*.

- It was also stated that the Indian Railways will set up a **KISAN RAIL**.

Know! all about KISAN RAIL

- Indian Railways is introducing first "Kisan Rail" from Devlali to Danapur

- The train will provide seamless supply chain of Perishable produce.

- This train is a step towards realizing the goal of doubling farmers' incomes by 2022.

- Indian Railways aims to help double farmers' income with the launch of Kisan Rail.

- This train will help in bringing perishable agricultural products like vegetables, fruits to the market in a short period of time.

- The train with **frozen containers** is expected to build a **seamless national cold supply chain for perishables,** inclusive of fish, meat and milk.

- Nasik and surrounding region produces huge quantity of fresh vegetables, fruits, flowers, other perishables, onions and other agro products. These perishables are mainly transported to areas around Patna, Prayagraj, Katni, Satna etc.

- Indian Railways have earlier run **single commodity special trains** like Banana Specials etc. But this will be the first ever multi commodity trains and will carry fruits

Infrastructure Development: PM launched financing facility under Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

Relevance IN – Prelims (about PM-KISAN scheme and Agriculture Infrastructure Fund) + Mains (GS III food processing+ infrastructure development + GS II government policies and interventions)

What's the NEWS

- Prime Minister launched the financing facility of Rs. 1 lakh crore under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

- Prime Minister also released the sixth instalment of funds of Rs. 17,000 crore to 8.5 crore farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme.

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

- The Union Cabinet has approved the **Central Sector Scheme** of financing facility under "Agriculture Infrastructure Fund" of Rs. 1 Lakh Crore.
- The Fund will catalyze the creation of **post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming** assets such as cold storage, collection centres, processing units, etc.
- These assets will enable farmers to get greater value for their produce, as they will be able to **store and sell at higher prices, reduce wastage, and increase processing and value addition.**
- Rs. 1 Lakh Crore will be sanctioned under the financing facility in partnership with **multiple lending institutions**
- The beneficiaries of the scheme will include farmers, PACS, Marketing Cooperative Societies, FPOs, SHGs, Joint Liability Groups (JLG), Multipurpose Cooperative Societies, Agri-entrepreneurs, **Startups**, and Central/State agency or Local Body sponsored **Public-Private Partnership Projects.**

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojna (PM-KISAN)

- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojna (PM-KISAN) scheme, launched on 01 December 2018, has provided a direct cash benefit of overRs. 75,000 Crore to more than 9.9 Crore farmers.
- This has enabled them to fulfil their agricultural requirements and support their families.

PM -KISAN (highlights)

- PM Kisan is a Central Sector scheme with 100% funding from Government of India.
- It has become operational from 1.12.2018.
- Under the scheme an income support of 6,000/- per year in three equal installments will be provided to small and marginal farmer families having combined land holding/**ownership of upto 2 hectares.**
- Definition of family for the scheme is husband, wife and minor children.
- State Government and UT administration will identify the farmer families which are eligible for support as per scheme guidelines.
- The fund will be directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

PM – KISAN (Scheme Exclusion)

The following categories of beneficiaries of higher economic status shall not be eligible for benefit under the scheme.

- All Institutional Land holders.

Farmer families which belong to one or more of the following categories:

- Former and present holders of constitutional posts
- Former and present Ministers/ State Ministers and former/present Members of LokSabha/ RajyaSabha/ State Legislative Assemblies/ State Legislative Councils,former and present Mayors of Municipal Corporations, former and present Chairpersons of District Panchayats.

- All **serving or retired officers** and employees of Central/ State Government Ministries /Offices/Departments and its field units Central or State PSEs and Attached offices /Autonomous Institutions under Government as well as regular employees of the Local Bodies
- All **superannuated/retired pensioners** whose monthly pension is Rs.10,000/-or more
- All Persons who paid Income Tax in last assessment year
- Professionals like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants, and Architects registered with Professional bodies and carrying out profession by undertaking practices.

Defence: Import embargo on 101 defence items to boost indigenisation of defence

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the import embargo and about negative list) + Mains (GS III Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

What's the NEWS
- Defence Minister announced a list of 101 items that the Defence Ministry will stop importing.
- It means that the Armed Forces—Army, Navy and Air Force—will only procure all of these 101 items from domestic manufacturers.
- The manufacturers could be private sector players or defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).

Know! about the import embargo on 101 items
- The Department of Military Affairs (DMA), Ministry of Defence (MoD) has **prepared a list of 101 items for which there would be an embargo on the import** beyond the timeline indicated against them
- The list is prepared by MoD after several rounds of consultations with all stakeholders, including Army, Air Force, Navy, DRDO, Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and private industry to assess current and future capabilities of the Indian industry for manufacturing various ammunition/ weapons/platforms/equipment within India.
- The list of weapons banned for import will be **reviewed every yea**r and more items will be added to it after discussions with the department of military affairs (DMA).
- With latest embargo on import of 101 items, it is estimated that contracts worth almost Rs four lakh crore will be placed upon the domestic industry within the next five to seven years.
- The embargo on imports is planned to be progressively **implemented between 2020 to 2024.**
- It offers a great opportunity to the Indian defence industry to rise to the occasion to **manufacture the items in the negative list** by using their own design and development capabilities or adopting the technologies **designed and developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO**) to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces in the coming years.
- The MoD has adopted many progressive measures to encourage and facilitate 'Ease of Doing Business' by the defence Production entities.
- All necessary steps would be taken to ensure that timelines for production of equipment as per the **Negative Import List are met**
- The Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) to ensure that no item in the negative list is processed for import in the future.

Other initiatives to boost defence sector
- In another relevant step, the MoD has **bifurcated the capital procurement** budget for 2020-21 between domestic and foreign capital procurement routes.
- A separate budget head has been created with an outlay of nearly Rs 52,000 crore for domestic capital procurement in the current financial year.
- The other things Finance Minister had mentioned in May for the defence sector included raising the Foreign Direct Investment in defence manufacturing from **49 per cent to 74 per cent under the automatic route,** improving the autonomy and accountability of the Ordnance Factory Board

Why this step was needed?

- As per Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which tracks defence exports and imports globally, India has been the **second largest importer between 2014 and 2019** with US$ 16.75 billion worth of imports

- India was the **third-biggest military spender** in the world last year after the **United States and China**, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) said in a **report released in April.**

Infrastructure Development: Connectivity to Andaman & Nicobar Islands (CANI)
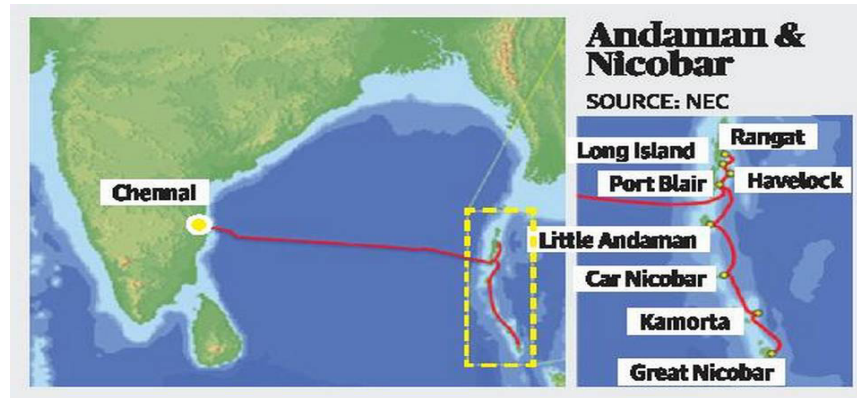
Relevance IN – Prelims (about CANI + about optical fibre cable project + about Island Development Agency + Mains (GS III infrastructure development + GS II government policies and interventions)

What's the NEWS

- Prime Minister inaugurated the first ever undersea optical fibre cable project for Andaman and Nicobar Islands

- It will provide high speed broadband connections in the union territory at par with services in the mainland.

Know! about the optical fibre cable project

- The Prime Minister had laid the foundation for 2,312-kilometer Chennai - Andaman and Nicobar Islands (CANI) connecting submarine optical fibre cable project on December 30, 2018.

- The service had begun on a major chunk of the islands from **Chennai to Port Blair, Port Blair to Little Andaman and Port Blair to Swaraj Island.**

- The Submarine Cable will help A&N in getting cheaper & better connectivity and all the benefits of Digital India, especially in improving online education, tele-medicine, banking system, online trading and in boosting tourism.

- Besides, Port Blair, it will connect other islands namely Swaraj Dweep (Havlock), Long Island, Rangat, Little Andaman, Kamorta, Car Nicobar, and Greater Nicobar.

career Launcher IAS

- All telecom operators in the country will be able to provide their mobile and broadband services using the CANI optical fibre link.
- Internet with speed of 400 gigabyte (GB) per second will be provided at Port Blair and for other islands it will be 200 GB per second.
- Work of laying undersea cable has been executed by BSNL in a record time of less than 24 months.
- This project will give a boost to 4G mobile services and digital services like tele-education, tele-health, e-governance services, and tourism on the islands.

Additional info

Know! about Island Development Agency

- The Island Development Agency was formed 3 years ago (2017) for the holistic development of islands. It is **chaired by the Union Home Minister**

Other IDA Members

- Cabinet secretary
- Home secretary
- Secretary (environment, forests and climate change)
- Secretary (tourism)
- Secretary (tribal welfare)
- The Island Development Agency analysed the developments taken place in favour of the programme **"Holistic development of islands"**.
- **10 islands** namely Smith, Ross, Aves, Long and Little Andaman in Andaman & Nicobar and Minicoy, Bangaram, Suheli, Cherium and Tinnakara in Lakshadweep have been identified for holistic development in the first phase.
- Development Plans with focus on creation of jobs for the islanders through tourism promotion as well as export of seafood and coconut-based products made in the Islands have been prepared and are being implemented in **four islands of Andaman & Nicobar and five islands of Lakshadweep.**
- In the second phase, suitable sites in 12 more islands of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and 5 islands in Lakshadweep have been covered.

High Impact Projects & Better Land, Air and Water Ways

- High Impact Projects are being expanded in 12 islands of Andaman and Nicobar.
- Apart from providing for better internet & mobile connectivity,the effort is to further improve physical connectivity through road, air and water.
- The work on two major bridges and the NH-4 in order to improve the road connectivity of North and Middle Andaman.
- The Port Blair Airport is being enhanced to handle a Capacity of 1200 passengers.Along with this the airports are ready for operations in Diglipur, Car Nicobar and Campbell - Bay.

- The Passenger Terminal in Swaraj Dweep, Shaheed Dweep and Long Island along with Water Aerodrom Infrastructure like Floating Jetty will be ready in the coming months.
- Andaman & Nicobar will be developed as an hub of Port Led Development as it is at a Competitive Distance from many ports of the World.
- Islands (Swaraj Dweep, Shaheed Dweep, Hutbay, and Long) in Andaman and Nicobar, and three islands (Kavaratti, Agatti, and Minicoy) in Lakshadweep have been identified for **seaplane operations.**

Science & Technology: India-Canada IC-IMPACTS Annual Research Conference

IC-IMPACTS 2020 Annual Research Conference

August 6 – 7, 2020
7:00am – 10:00am (PT) /
10:00 am – 1:00 pm (ET) /
7:30pm – 10:30pm (IST)

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Annual Research Conference will be hosted **online**.

This online event will feature highlights from IC-IMPACTS research projects across Canada and India from the Centre's three core themes: **Safe and Sustainable Infrastructure**, **Integrated Water Management**, and **Public Health.** The conference will spotlight new technologies, demonstration projects and approaches aiding in the growing demand for smart and clean economies.

This year we are introducing **IC-IMPACTS Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition**, an academic competition created to assist students with fostering effective presentation and communication skills. Participants will only have three minutes to explain the breadth and significance of their research project to the audience.

Register at www.ic-impacts.com
Registration is free and open to all researchers interested in participating.

IC-IMPACTS

Relevance IN – Prelims (about India-Canada IC-IMPACTS + Mains (GS II Bilateral relations + GS III awareness in the field of science and technology)

What's the NEWS

- India-Canada IC-IMPACTS Annual Research Conference discussed ways of taking the cooperation between the countries to the next

Know! about the conference

- The Conference was organised virtually by the **India-Canada Centre for Innovative Multidisciplinary Partnership to Accelerate Community Transformation and Sustainability (IC-IMPACTS)** on 6 August 2020.

- IC-IMPACT has resulted in 1,129 publications, 63 bilateral research projects, 24 technology deployments, 352 partnerships, and 29 patents and technology disclosures.

- Approximately 200 highly qualified Indian students and a large number of Canadian students, most of whom are masters, Ph.D., and post-doctoral fellows were trained under the IC-IMPACT.

- DST has been working with IC-IMPACTS for research partnerships since 2013. This partnership is aimed towards working hand-in-hand with communities in the two countries to develop community-based solutions for the most urgent needs.

- The major focus areas of research cooperation under the IC-IMPACT are green buildings and smart cities; occupants survivability in buildings during fires; integrated water management & safe and sustainable infrastructure; and health problems arising from water-borne and infectious diseases.

Know! more about IC-IMPACTS

- IC-IMPACTS (the India-Canada Centre for Innovative Multidisciplinary Partnerships to Accelerate Community Transformation and Sustainability) **is the first, and only, Canada-India Research Centre of Excellence** established through the Canadian Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) as a new Centre dedicated to the development of **research collaborations between Canada and India**.

- Built upon the vision of three of Canada's leading research universities — IC-IMPACTS is a pan-Canadian Centre **bringing together researchers, industry innovators, community leaders, government agencies, and community organizations from across India and Canada,** to work hand-in-hand to find solutions to the key challenges that affect the quality of life of millions of people in Indian and Canadian communities.

Agriculture & Farmers Welfare: Krishi Megh

Relevance IN -Prelims (about Krishi Megh + National Agricultural Higher Education Project + KVC ALUNET + Mains (GS III e-technology in the aid of farmers

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare,launched the **Krishi Megh (National Agricultural Research & Education System -Cloud Infrastructure and Services)** along with **The KVC ALUNET (Krishi Vishwavidyalaya Chhatr Alumni Network)** and Online Accreditation System for Higher Agricultural Educational Institutions (HEI).

National Agricultural Higher Education Project

- **The Government of India-World Bank funded National Agricultural Higher Education Project** is designed for strengthening the national agricultural education system in the country with the overall objective to provide more relevant and high-quality education to the agricultural university students

Krishi Megh

- The Krishi Megh is a step forward towards digital agriculture of New India

- **ICAR establish the Krishi Megh** that integrates the ICAR-Data Centre at ICAR-Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute, New Delhi with the Disaster Recovery Centre at the ICAR-National Academy of Agricultural Research Management, Hyderabad.

- The main features of the Krishi Megh that is equipped with the **latest AI / Deep learning software / tools kits** for building and deploying of deep learning based applications through image analysis, disease identification in livestock, etc.

- Deploying of **deep learning based applications** such as disease and pest identification using image analysis, detection of maturity and ripening of fruits through image analysis, disease identification in livestock etc.

- Krishi Megh enables the farmers, researchers, students and policy makers more equipped with updated and latest information regarding agriculture, research, education and extension in digital form generated by ICAR institutes and State Agriculture Universities.

KVC ALUNET

- This shall enable the alumni of all the 74 Agricultural Universities in connecting with each other and making it possible to assist the students in internship, placements and to provide support to their alma maters.

Agriculture & Farmers Welfare: India ranks first in number of organic farmers and ninth in terms of area under organic farming

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the facts related to organic farming in India and steps taken by the government) + GS III (farmer's welfare- Major crops cropping patterns in various parts of the country

What's the NEWS

- India ranks **first in number of organic farmers** and **ninth in terms of area under organic farming.**

Know! about organic farming present statics

- **Sikkim became the first State** in the world to become fully organic and other States including Tripura and Uttarakhand have set similar targets.

- North East India has traditionally been organic and the consumption of chemicals is far less than rest of the country.

- The major organic exports from India have been **flax seeds, sesame, soybean, tea, medicinal plants**, rice and pulses, which were instrumental in driving an increase of nearly 50% in organic exports in 2018-19, touching Rs 5151 crore.

- Modest commencement of exports from Assam, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland to UK, USA, Swaziland and Italy have proved the potential by increasing volumes and expanding to new destinations as the demand for health foods increases.

Know! the steps taken by the government to promote organic farming

- With the aim of assisting farmers to adopt organic farming and improve remunerations due to premium prices, two dedicated programs namely **Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North East Region (MOVCD) and Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)** were launched in 2015 to encourage chemical free farming.

- Both PKVY and MOVCD are **promoting certification under Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) and National Program for Organic Production (NPOP) respectively** targeting domestic and exports markets.

- The Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017 are based on the standards of NPOP and PGS.

- The consumer should look for the logos of FSSAI, Jaivik Bharat / PGS Organic India on the produce to establish the organic authenticity of the produce.

- PGS Green is given to chemical free produce under transition to 'organic' which takes 3 years.

- About 40,000 clusters are being assisted under PKVY covering an area of about 7 lakh ha. MOVCD has brought in its fold 160 FPOs cultivating about 80,000 ha.

- The organic e-commerce platform www.jaivikkheti.in is being strengthened for directly linking farmers with retail as well as bulk buyers.

NITI Aayog: NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission, NASSCOM launch Artificial Intelligence Step-up modules to school students nationwide

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ATL AI Modules'+ ATL AI Step Up Module) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of science and technology – AI + GSII Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

What's the NEWS

- After a successful launch of a unique initiative to take Artificial Intelligence (AI) to schools through 'ATL AI Modules', Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog in collaboration with NASSCOM launched the '**ATL AI Step**

Up Module' for students on the eve of India's Independence Day in order to drive AI education and innovation to the next level in **schools across the country.**
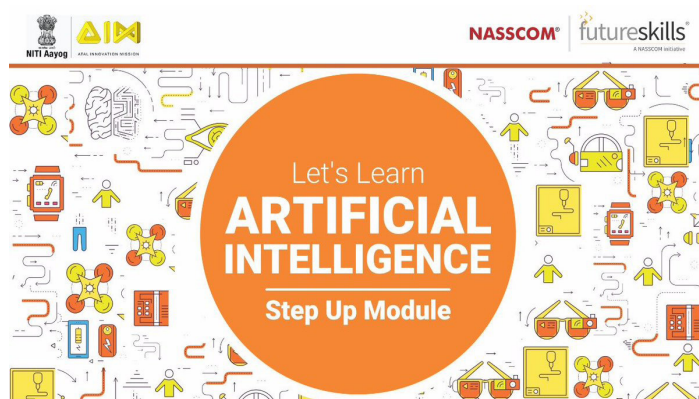
Know! about the ATL AI Step Up Module

- This module is the next step in bringing AI to Indian classrooms and is a successor to the **AI Base module launched in February this year**.
- The AI Step-up Module provides a comprehensive set of learn it yourself Advanced modules to those who wish to expand their knowledge base after becoming familiar with the basics of the AI discipline through the AI base module.
- The module is designed in an attractive graphical manner that is comprehensible for all students belonging to rural and urban areas.
- The step-up module needs no previous knowledge and introduces the concepts to students from the basics using interactive tools and activities so as to keep their attention undivided.

Know! about the BASE MODULE and STEP UP MODULE

- **The Base module** was specifically devised considering students as young as 12 years of age, with absolutely no prior background of AI to ignite curiosity on AI in their young minds and to contribute to the ecosystem of innovation.
- **Step up module** has been exquisitely designed and presented to involve young students across the country to induce inclusive learning and to empower youngsters of our country to create AI integrated innovations
- The AI Step-Up module would be available for all students across the country and could be accessed at https://aim.gov.in/Lets_learn_AI_StepUp_Module.pdf

Additional info

Atal Tinkering Lab

- In ATLs, students of class 6th to 12th acquire a problem-solving attitude, develop innovative solutions leveraging technologies like 3D printers, robotics, miniaturised electronics, IOT and programming and DIY kits, with support from teachers and mentors.

Atal Innovative Mission

- AIM is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.
- AIM's objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of the country.

Space Awareness: NASA's planet hunter TESS completes primary mission

Relevance IN – Prelims (about TESS and its objective) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of space)

What's the NEWS

- NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS), finished its primary mission imaging about 75 per cent of the starry sky as part of a two-year-long survey.

- After spending a year imaging the southern sky, TESS will take another 15 months to collect additional observations in the north and to survey areas along the ecliptic -- the plane of Earth's orbit around the Sun -- that the satellite has not yet imaged.
- In addition to its planetary discoveries, TESS has observed the outburst of a comet in our solar system, as well as numerous exploding stars.

Know! about TESS

- The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) is designed **to discover thousands of exoplanets** in orbit around the brightest dwarf stars in the sky.
- In its prime mission, a two-year survey of the solar neighborhood, TESS monitored the brightness of stars for periodic drops caused by planet transits.
- The prime mission ended on July 4, 2020 and TESS is now in an extended mission.
- TESS is finding planets ranging from small, rocky worlds to giant planets, showcasing the diversity of planets in the galaxy.

Additional info

Exoplanets

- Planets that orbit a star other than our sun.
- An exoplanet or extrasolar planet is a planet outside the Solar System.
- The first possible evidence of an exoplanet was noted in 1917, but was not recognized as such. The first confirmation of detection occurred in 1992.

Kepler Space Telescope

- The Kepler space telescope is a retired space telescope launched by NASA to discover Earth-size planets orbiting other stars.
- It was an observatory in space
- Named after astronomer Johannes Kepler, the spacecraft was launched on March 7, 2009, into an Earth-trailing heliocentric orbit.
- It was decommissioned in 2018.

Space Awareness: Skyroot Aerospace first private company to test upper stage rocket engine

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Raman rocket engine + about rocket launcher Vikram-I) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of space- indigenization of technology and developing new technology.)

What's the NEWS

- Spacetech startup Skyroot Aerospace has successfully test fired **an upper stage rocket engine,** becoming the first Indian private company to demonstrate the capability to build a homegrown rocket engine.

Know! more about the rocket engine (Raman)

- The first rocket engine named **Raman** which can hurl satellites of 250-700 kgs into a lower earth orbit, is expected to be launched by end-2021.
- The company manufactured **India's first 3D printed Cryogenic rocket engine** which will run on high performance Cryogenic propellants Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) & Liquid Oxygen.
- The company demonstrated India's first 100 per cent 3D-printed Bi-Propellant Liquid Rocket Engine injector.
- The engine is capable of multiple restarts enabling them to insert various satellites into multiple orbits in a single mission.

Know! more about the launch vehicle (Vikram-I)

- The first launch vehicle 'Vikram-I' which is under manufacturing and targeting launch in December 2021, hosts an Orbit Adjustment Module (OAM) at the top which gives the final burn and inserts multiple satellites into space.

Initiatives taken by the government to boost private players in space sector

- The union cabinet recently approved private player participation in space in June 2020 to transform the sector.

Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACe)

- IN-SPACe is an independent nodal agency under Department of Space for allowing space activities and usage of department of Space owned facilities by non-government private entities (NGPEs) as well as to prioritise the launch manifest.

New Space India Ltd (NSIL)

- It is a Central Public Sector Enterprise under Department of Space and Commercial Arm of ISRO established to scale up the industry participation in Indian space programmes.

Environment: Hornbill

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Hornbill+ about Papum Reserve Forest (RF) +Pakke Tiger Reserve + birdlife international) + GS III (Environment conservation)

What's the NEWS

- A study based on satellite data has flagged a high rate of **deforestation in a major hornbill habitat in Arunachal Pradesh.**

- Ecologists assessed the changes in forest cover of the **Papum Reserve Forest (RF) adjoining the Pakke Tiger Reserve**

- According to the Global Forest Watch 2020 report, Arunachal Pradesh lost 1,110 sq.km. of primary forest from 2002-2019.

- "Forests still cover 74% of the total land area of the State, and steps are being taken to stop felling\

Papum Reserve Forest

- Papum RF is a nesting habitat of three species of the large, colourful fruit-eating hornbills: **Great, Wreathed and Oriental Pied.**

- The satellite data pointed to alarming deforestation rates in Papum RF

- Papum Reserve Forest is geographically situated in the south west of East Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh.

- It is surrounded by Itanagar Wildlife Sanctuary to the east and Pakke Wildlife Sanctuary to the west.

- Papum Reserve Forest forms part of the Eastern Himalayas Endemic Bird Area.

- It is a part of the Indo-Burma Biodiversity hotspot in India.

- There are four Biodiversity Hostpots in India : Himalaya, Indo-Burma, Sundalands and Western Ghats and Sri Lanka.

Know! all about Hornbills

- The hornbills (Bucerotidae) are a family of bird found in tropical and subtropical Africa, Asia and Melanesia.

- India is home to nine species of hornbills. The northeastern region has the highest diversity of hornbill species within India.

- Papum RF is a nesting habitat of three species of hornbills: the great hornbill (Buceros bicornis), wreathed hornbill (Aceros undulatus) and the Oriental pied hornbill (Anthracoceros albirostris), Wreathed and Oriental Pied.

- The 862 sq.km. Pakke reserve houses a fourth species, the Rufous-necked hornbill (Aceros nipalensis) species are found here.

- Referred to as '**forest engineers' or 'farmers of forest' f**or playing a key role in dispersing seeds of tropical trees, hornbills indicate the prosperity and balance of the forest they build nests in.

- The great hornbill is the state bird of **Arunachal Pradesh and Kerala.**

- They are the cultural symbols of some ethnic communities in the northeast, specifically the **Nyishi of Arunachal Pradesh.**

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species notes that the overwhelming majority of hornbills are not in danger of becoming extinct.

- 26 out of the 62 species of hornbills are Globally Threatened or Near Threatened with extinction, with all other species listed as Least Concern

- The great hornbill (Buceros bicornis) is one of the larger members of the hornbill family. It is found in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. Its impressive size and colour have made it important in many tribal cultures and rituals.

- The great hornbill is evaluated as **vulnerable**.

- It is protected at the highest level under **Schedule I** of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Additional info

Endemic Bird Area

- An *Endemic Bird Area* (EBA) is an *area* of *land identified* by *BirdLife International* as *being important* for *habitat-based bird conservation because* it *contains* the *habitats* of *restricted-range bird species*

- EBAs *contain* about 93% of the *world's restricted-range bird species*

BirdLife International

- It is a global partnership of non-governmental organizations that strives to conserve birds and their habitats.

- BirdLife International's priorities include preventing extinction of bird species, identifying and safeguarding important sites for birds, maintaining and restoring key bird habitats, and empowering conservationists worldwide.

- BirdLife International has identified 7,500 important bird areas and manages more than 2,500,000 million acres (1,000,000 hectares) of wildlife habitat.

- **As the official listing authority for birds for the World Conservation Union's red list of threatened species**, BirdLife International has identified more than 1,000 bird species threatened with extinction and has developed conservation strategies for each of them.

- In addition, the group publishes the quarterly magazine World Birdwatch and the scientific journal Bird Conservation International.

Defence: Indigenisation portal SRIJAN

Relevance IN – Prelims (about SRIJAN Portal + other signed agreements – DISC,iDEX) + Mains (GS III indigenisation of technologies)

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) launched Department of Defence Production, MoD's portal SRIJAN which is a 'one stop shop online portal that provides access to the vendors to take up items that can be taken up for indigenization.

- Four Contracts of Defence India Start-up Challenge under iDEX and four MoUs between industry partners and Defence PSUs were also signed

Know! about SRIJAN portal

- Department of Defence Production, MoD has developed an indigenization portal, srijandefence.gov.in, as "opportunities for Make in India in Defence", which will **give information on items that can be taken up for indigenization by the private sector.**

- On this portal, DPSUs/OFB/SHQs can display their items which they have been importing or are going to import which the Indian Industry can design, develop and manufacture as per their capability or through joint venture with OEMs.

- The Indian Industry will be able to show their interest. The concerned DPSUs/OFB/SHQs, based on their requirement of the items and their guidelines & procedures will interact with the Indian industry for indigenization.

- The portal displays information in a structured way, which includes the item name, image and specification, values of imports, NATO Classification (indicative), etc. It also has a search facility.

Know! about other signed agreements

- DDP Signed 4 Contracts of **Defence India Start-up Challen**ge (DISC) 3 under **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX).**

- iDEX aims to create an ecosystem which fosters innovation and encourages technology development in Defence by engaging R&D institutes, academia, industries, startups and individual innovators.

- The iDEX framework was launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in April 2018.

- iDEX is being implemented by Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), a Section 8 company formed for this purpose, with Rs 50 crore support each from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), both of which are Defence Public Sector Units.

- More than 700 startups and innovators responded to the 3 rounds of **Defence India Startup Challenge (DISC),** out of which over 55 startups/ individuals have been selected to receive innovation grants in 15 technological areas under DISC 1, 2 and 3, through the Prototype funding guidelines called "**Support for Prototype and Research Kickstart" (SPARK),** which entail provisioning of grants upto Rs 1.5 crore to the Startups on the basis of milestones through multiple tranches.

Information Technology: Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge) + Mains (GS III indigenization of technology and developing new technology. +Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers)

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister of Communications and Electronics & Information Technology, launched "**Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge-Innovate Solutionsfor #Aatmanirbhar Bharat**" to provide further impetus to the strong ecosystem of Start-up, innovation and research in the country.

- IIT Madras and Center for Development of Advance Computing (CDAC) have developed two microprocessors named **SHAKTI (32 bit) and VEGA (64 bit)** respectively using Open Source Architecture under the aegis of Microprocessor Development Programme of Ministry of Electronics and IT.

Know! about Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge

- "Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge- Innovate Solutions for #Aatmanirbhar Bharat" seeks to **invite innovators, startups and students to use these microprocessors to develop various technology products.**

- The "Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge" is part of the series of proactive, preemptive and graded measures taken by Ministry of Electronics and IT to spur the technology led innovation ecosystem in the country

- Open to students at all levels and startups, the Challenge demands contestants to not only tinker with these Swadeshi Processor IPs & facilitate them with innovating the frugal solutions for societal needs but also make available the entire home-grown ecosystem around Swadeshi Processors to develop the complex designs for catering to both global and domestic requirements in near future.

- Financial support to the tune of Rs. 4.30 Crore at various stages of the Challenge for developing the hardware prototype and incubating a start-up is being offered.

- The Challenge spread over 10 months, kick-starts with registration process at https://innovate.mygov.in on 18th August 2020 and culminates in June 2021

NITI Aayog: Atal Innovation Mission partners with India-Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre to expand Start-up ecosystem

Relevance IN – Prelims (about India Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre and AIM) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of science and technology)

What's the NEWS

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and **Business Sweden** on behalf of **India Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre** are collaborating to promote the disruptive potential of Indian entrepreneurs, and, boost the vibrant start-up ecosystem across the country.

India-Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre

- India-Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre is a collaboration between AIIMS Delhi, AIIMS Jodhpur and Business Sweden.

- The Innovation Centre aims to create an ecosystem of open innovation and is built under strategic guidance from Government of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Government of Sweden's Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and Embassy of Sweden in India.

- It also has a strong network of ecosystem partners - Invest India, AGNII, Startup India, and knowledge partners – AstraZeneca, NASSCOM and VINNOVA.

- The Innovation centre has recently launched its first healthcare innovation challenge to collaborate with partners on the Innovation Centre platform to help solve some of the problems in the healthcare delivery landscape of India.

- Through this collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission, the India-Sweden Healthcare Innovation centre ecosystem will be further strengthened to provide all the required support to the innovators for faster scale-up of their solutions.

- The India Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre has agreed to support the goals of AIM by enabling synergies towards creating a sustainable ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship between the two countries.

Know! the role of AIM

- Under AIM, various programmes or initiatives are being run such as Atal New India Challenge (ANIC), Atal Incubation Centre (AIC), Atal Community Innovation Centers (ACIC), Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) and Atal Research & Innovation for Small Enterprises (ARISE).

- Through this collaboration, these initiatives are set to receive support by the means of conducting programs, awareness campaigns, various activities and events that would promote the overall innovation grid of both the countries through these programmes.

Atal Innovative Mission

- AIM is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

- AIM's objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of the country.

Six major initiatives of AIM:

- Atal Tinkering Labs-Creating problem-solving mindset across schools in India.

- Atal Incubation Centers-Fostering world class start-ups and adding a new dimension to the incubator model.

- Atal New India Challenges-Fostering product innovations and aligning them to the needs of various sectors/ministries.
- Mentor India Campaign- A national Mentor network in collaboration with public sector, corporates and institutions, to support all the initiatives of the mission.
- Atal Community Innovation Centre- To stimulate community centric innovation and ideas in the unserved / underserved regions of the country including Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- ARISE-To stimulate innovation and research in the MSME industry.

Know! about Business Sweden

- It is an organisation jointly owned by the Government of Sweden and representatives from the Swedish business community, through the Swedish Foreign Trade Association
- Business Sweden's purpose is to help Swedish companies to grow their global sales and international companies to invest and expand in Sweden.
- It was formed in January, 2013 as a result of a merger between the government agency Invest Sweden and the organization Swedish Trade Council.

Economy: RBI unveils framework for umbrella entity to manage payment systems

Relevance IN – Prelims (about NPCI and the facts about the pan-India umbrella entity for retail payments + Mains (GS III Economic development – financial inclusion)

What's the NEWS

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) unveiled the framework to set up a pan-India umbrella entity
- Any **new umbrella organization for retail payments on the lines of the National Payments Corp. of India (NPCI)** must have a minimum paid-up capital of Rs. 500 crore and strive for inter-operability with NPCI systems
- Such organizations are expected to challenge the monopoly of NPCI, which was floated by the RBI and the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) in 2008.

Know! the Framework for authorisation of pan-India umbrella entity for retail payments

- The umbrella body will be tasked with setting up, managing, and operating new payment systems
- Such entity, to be incorporated in India under the Companies Act, 2013, could be a 'for-profit' or Section 8 company
- It will have a minimum paid-up capital of ₹500 crore
- No single promoter group shall have more than 40% investment in the capital of the umbrella entity
- RBI can nominate a member to the board and approve the appointment of directors

- Min. paid-up capital -500 crore
- No single promoter or promoter group should have more than 40% investment in the capital of this entity.
- The promoter "can" bring down shareholding in the entity to a minimum of 25% after five years
- Applicants must also have at least three years of experience in the payments ecosystem.
- A minimum net-worth of Rs 300 crore should be maintained at all times,
- The proposed entity may be a 'for-profit' or a Section 8 company as may be decided by it
- The promoters or promoter groups shall upfront demonstrate capital contribution of not less than 10% or Rs. 50

crore at the time of making an application for setting up of the umbrella entity

- Under the terms set out by the central bank, the scope of activities of this umbrella entity will be to set up, manage and operate new payment systems in the retail space.
- It will also have to operate clearing and settlement systems for participating banks and non-banks, and is also expected to interact and be interoperable, to the extent possible, with the systems operated by NPCI.

Know! about NPCI

- NPCI was incorporated as a not-for-profit company under the provisions of the Companies Act to provide infrastructure to the entire banking system in India.
- The 10 core promoter banks are SBI, Punjab National Bank, Canara Bank, Bank of Baroda, Union Bank of India, Bank of India, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Citibank and HSBC.

Science & Technology: Conference on 'Aerosol Air Quality, Climate Change and Impact on Water Resources and Livelihoods in the Greater Himalayas'

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ARIES + about the objective of this conference)+ GSIII (awareness in the field of science and technology + environment conservation)

What's the NEWS

- ARIES, Nainital is going to organise an online international conference on **Aerosol Air Quality, Climate Change and Impact on Water Resources and Livelihoods in the Greater Himalayas.**

Know! about the conference

- The conference will deliberate on rapid increase in air pollution associated with industrialisation and urbanisation and its resultant impacts on regional and global air quality
- Aryabhatta Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital **an autonomous research institute under the Department of Science and Technology** (DST), Govt. of India and Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, (HNBGU) (a central University) Srinagar, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, are planning to jointly organize the three-day online international conference
- The international conference is being organized as a part of the celebration of Golden Jubilee Commemoration Year of DST.
- This is the first Online International conference to be held at ARIES, Nainital, during this Pandemic.
- The invited speakers in the conference are from different parts of the globe

Know! about the activities of ARIES

- ARIES, Nainital, started research activities in the field of **atmospheric science and climate change** about two decades ago.
- It has installed a battery of modern instruments at **Manora Peak,** a strategically important location in the **Central Himalayan region,** for in situ measurements of various optical, physical and chemical properties of aerosols and trace gases.
- The ARIES has also established both national and international collaborations in these areas.

Know! about Aerosols

- An **aerosol** is a tiny particle (solid or liquid) in the atmosphere.
- The smaller and lighter a particle is, the longer is stays in the **air**.
- Larger particles settle to the ground due to gravity after a few hours, whereas the smallest particles can stay in the atmosphere for weeks.

Know! about ARIES

- It is one of the leading research Institutes which specializes in observational Astronomy & Astrophysics and Atmospheric Sciences.
- The main research interests of Astronomy & Astrophysics division are in solar, planetary, stellar, galactic and extra-galactic astronomy including stellar variabilities, X-ray binaries, star clusters, nearby galaxies
- Research focus in Atmospheric Sciences division is mainly in the lower part of the atmosphere and covers the studies on aerosols and trace gases.

Greater Himalaya or Inner Himalaya, Central Himalaya or Himadri.

- It is the highest and northernmost section of the Himalayan mountain ranges.
- It extends southeastward across northern Pakistan, northern India, and Nepal before trending eastward across Sikkim state (India) and Bhutan and finally turning northeastward across northern Arunachal Pradesh state (India); The Great Himalayas contain many of the world's tallest peaks, including (from west to east) Nanga Parbat, Annapurna, Mount Everest, and Kanchenjunga.

Food Processing: APEDA signs MoUs with AFC India Limited and National Cooperative Union of India

Relevance IN – Prelims (about APEDA + NCUI + AFC India ltd) + Mains (GS III Food processing and related industries in India- scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.

What's the NEWS

- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (*APEDA*), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has signed MoUs with **AFC India Limited, and National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI)**
- The objective is to utilise their expertise by mutually working together to **synergize the activities in the interest of agriculture and allied sectors** for bringing better value to the stakeholders.

Know! about APEDA

- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is an apex body under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India**, responsible for the **export promotion of agricultural products.**
- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act passed by the Parliament in December, 1985.
- The Authority replaced the Processed Food Export Promotion Council (PFEPC).

National Cooperative Union of India, (NCUI)

- It is the apex organisation representing the entire cooperative movement in the country.
- It was established in 1929 as All India Cooperative Institutes Association and was re-organised as Indian Cooperative Union through the merger of Indian Provincial Cooperative Banks' Association with All India Cooperative Institutes Association and later in 1961 as National Cooperative Union of India.
- The National Cooperative Union of India is the sole representative of the Cooperative movement in the country.

AFC India Ltd. (formerly Agricultural Finance Corporation Ltd.)

- AFC India Ltd., is a deemed to be Govt. organization, wholly owned by Commercial Banks, NABARD and EXIM Bank, established in 1968.
- It is a multi-disciplinary cross-functional development organization providing consulting, policy advisory and implementation support for agriculture, rural development and other strategic socio-economic sectors in India.

Infrastructure Development: Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation India Limited (DFCCIL)
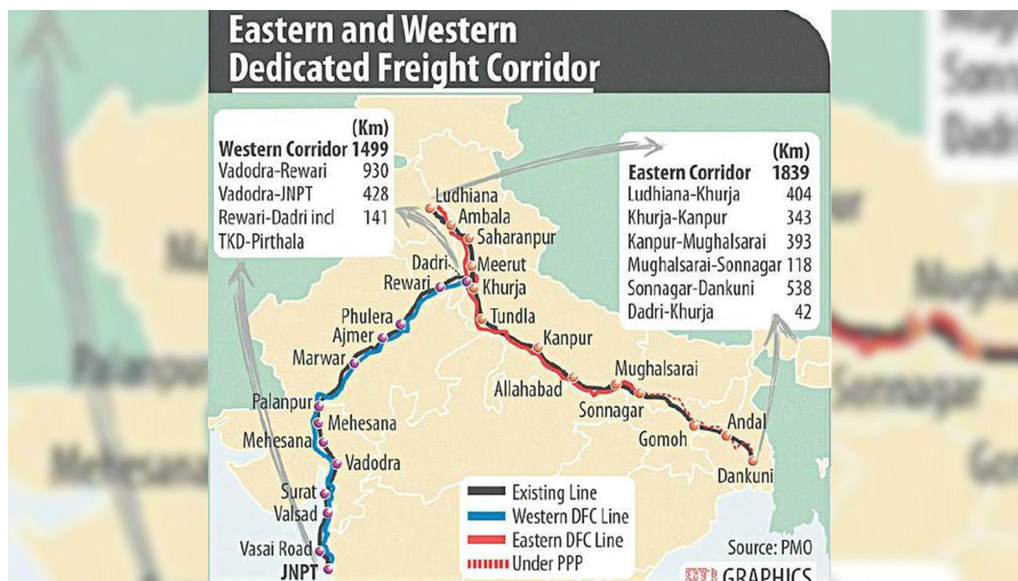
Relevance IN – Prelims (about DFCCIL + about Dedicated Freight Corridor) + Mains (GS III infrastructure development)

What's the NEWS

- The Minister of Railways reviewed the progress of Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation India Limited (DFCCIL).

Know! the current status of the project.

- It is expected that **Western Corridor connecting Dadri in Utttar Pradesh to Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT) in Mumbai** and **Eastern Corridor starting from Sahnewal near Ludhiana (Punjab) to terminate at Dankuni in West Bengal** shall be completed by December, 2021.
- Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFC) is one of the largest rail infrastructure projects undertaken by the Government of India. The overall cost is pegged at Rs 81,459 crores.
- DFCCIL has been set up as a special purpose vehicle to undertake planning, development, mobilization of financial resources, construction, maintenance and operation of Dedicated Freight Corridors.
- In the first phase the organisation is constructing the Western DFC (1504 Route km) and Eastern DFC (1856 route km) spanning a total length of 3360 route km.

Know! about the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL)

- It is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) corporation run by government of India's Ministry of Railways to undertake planning, development, and mobilisation of financial resources and construction, maintenance and operation of the "Dedicated Freight Corridors" (DFC).
- The DFCCIL was registered as a company under the Companies Act 1956 in 2006.
- First 2 DFC, Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC), and Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC), will decongest railway network by moving 70% of India's goods train to these two corridors

Some more facts about DFCCIL

- The Eastern & western dedicated freight corridors entail an investment of $12 billion, with the **World Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** partly funding the project with around $1.86 bn and $5.2 bn respectively.
- Currently, freight trains do not get priority over passenger trains. Once completed, at least 70% of the freight trains will be transferred on the DFCCIL network which will help in timely movement of cargo.
- DFCCIL will be monitoring the movement of freight trains at the **Operations Control Centre in Prayagraj**, which is the second largest in the world after Shanghai, China.
- **Private containers** will also be allowed to use the freight corridor but they have to pay track usage charges.

International Organisations: Government of India and AIIB sign agreement

Relevance IN – Prelims (about AIIB) + Mains (GS II Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate. + GS III infrastructure development)

What's the NEWS

- The Government of India, the Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) signed a loan agreement for a $500 million **Mumbai Urban Transport Project-III** to improve the network capacity, service quality and safety of the suburban railway system in Mumbai.

- This project will assist in **improved mobility, service quality and safety of passengers of the sub urban railway system of Mumbai**, by providing faster, more reliable and higher quality transport services compared to road-based transport.

- The total estimated cost of the **project is $997 million,** of which $500 million will be financed by the AIIB, $310 million by the Government of Maharashtra and $187 million by Ministry of Railways.

- The $500 million loan from the AIIB has a 5-year grace period and a maturity of 30 years.

Know! about AIIB

- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia.

- Headquartered in Beijing, it began operations in January 2016 and have now grown to 103 approved members worldwide.

- AIIB invests in sustainable infrastructure and other productive sectors in Asia and beyond,

- Membership in the AIIB is divided into regional (Asia) and non-regional (other continent) members.

- India is a founding member of AIIB

- It is open to all members of the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank

- AIIB allows for non-sovereign entities to apply for AIIB membership, assuming their home country is a member. (eg- sovereign wealth funds of a member country)

- **China is the largest contributor and also the largest shareholder** to the Bank, India is the second-largest shareholder, contributing USD 8.5 billion.

- The Bank can lend outside Asia provided that it supports connectivity with Asia or it is for a global

- The AIIB has approved for lending USD 200 million to National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).

Voting shares in the bank

- China (26.1 %)
- India (7.6%)
- Russia (6.01%)
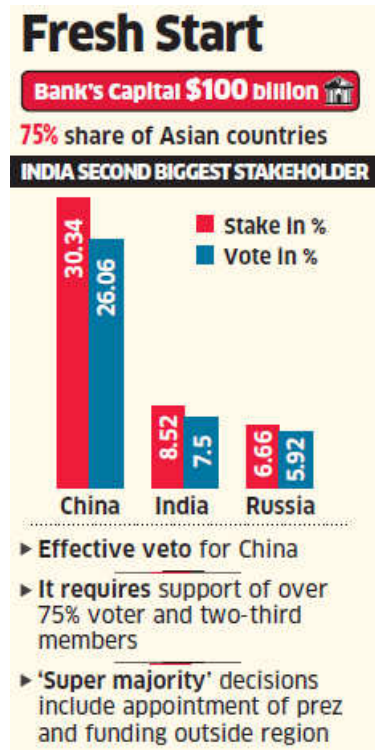- Germany (4.2 %).

Agreements signed by AIIB

- The AIIB has signed a co-financing framework agreement with the World Bank

AIIB has also signed three nonbinding Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with

- Asian Development Bank (ADB),
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD),
- European Investment Bank (EIB).

AIIB Support to India

- The total loan sanctioned by AIIB to five Indian projects is USD 1.074 billion.
- India is the largest beneficiary of AIIB financing for infrastructure projects.

Fresh Start

Bank's Capital $100 billion

75% share of Asian countries

INDIA SECOND BIGGEST STAKEHOLDER

- Stake In %
- Vote In %

	China	India	Russia
Stake In %	30.34	8.52	6.66
Vote In %	26.06	7.5	5.92

- **Effective veto** for China

- **It requires** support of over 75% voter and two-third members

- **'Super majority'** decisions include appointment of prez and funding outside region

Approved projects

➢ Bangalore Metro Rail Project
➢ Gujarat Rural Roads (MMGSY)
➢ India Infrastructure Fund.
➢ Andhra Pradesh 24 x 7 – Power For All Project.
➢ Covid-19 support for India.
➢ **Mumbai Urban Transport Project-III**

National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).

- NIIF is an Indian-government backed entity established to provide long-term capital to the country's infrastructure sector.

- Its portfolio includes investments in ports and logistics, real estate and renewables.

INVESTMENTS BY AIIB
($ million)

Country	$ million
India	1,214.0
Azerbaijan	600.0
Indonesia	441.5
Pakistan	400.0
Oman	317.0
Bangladesh	285.0
China	250.0
Egypt	210.0
Philipines	207.6
Emerging Asia	150.0
Georgia	114.0
Tajkitstan	87.5
Myanmar	20.0
Total	**4,296.6**

Source: AIIB

Miscellaneous: Association of Renewable Energy Agencies of States (AREAS)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the role od AREAS) + Mains (GS III infrastructure development – Energy security)

What's the NEWS

- 6th Foundation Day Ceremony of Association of Renewable Energy Agencies of States (AREAS)

Know! about AREAS

- Association of Renewable Energy Agencies of the States (AREAS) has been formed on **MNRE initiative to interact and learn from each other's experiences** and also share their best practices and knowledge regarding technologies and schemes/programmes.

- The AREAS got registered under **Society Registration Act** 1860 on 27 August 2014.

- **Union Minister for New & Renewable Energy is the Patron of the Association** and **Secretary, MNRE is the ex-officio President of the Association.**

- All SNAs (State Nodal Agencies) are the member of the Association.

## Know! about the genesis of AREAS

- Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) is the nodal agency at the central level for promotion of grid-connected and off-grid renewable energy in the country.

- Ministry's programmes are implemented **in close coordination with State Nodal Agencies (SNAs)** for renewable energy (RE).

- Over the period the SNAs have developed considerable knowledge and experience in planning and implementation of RE programmes.

- In this background it is important that SNAs interact and learn from each other's experiences and also share their best practices and knowledge regarding technologies and schemes/programmes.

- MNRE took an initiative in this regard in **consultation with SNAs, and Association of Renewable Energy Agencies of States** has been formed and registered as a society on 27 August 2014 under Society Registration Act 1860.

Financial Inclusion: Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) Completes 6 Years

Relevance IN – Prelims (about PMJDY) + Mains (GS III financial inclusion + GS II government policies and interventions)

What's the NEWS

- PMJDY was announced by Prime Minister, on 15th August 2014 and the programme launched on 28th August
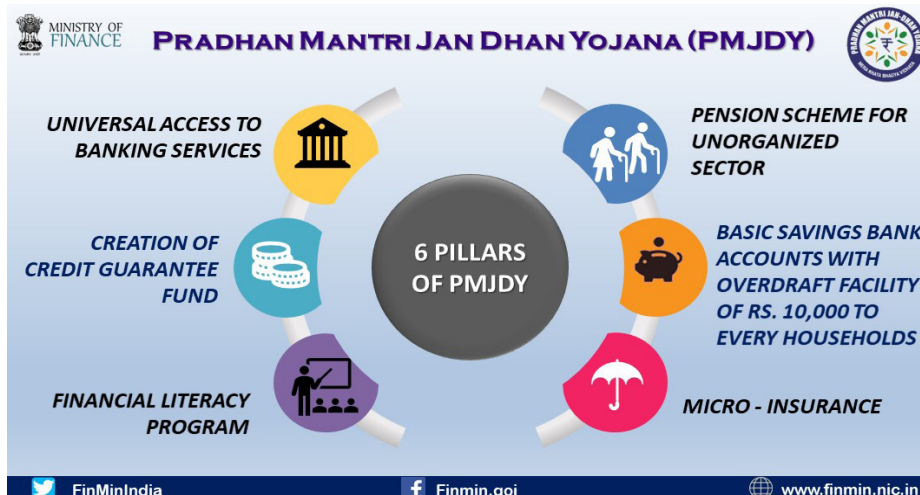
Know! the major aspects and achievements of this Scheme so far.

- PMJDY is National Mission for Financial Inclusion to ensure access to financial services, namely, Banking/ Savings & Deposit Accounts, Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension in an affordable manner.

Objectives

- Ensure access of financial products & services at an affordable cost
- Use of technology to lower cost & widen reach

Basic tenets of the scheme

- **Banking the unbanked -** Opening of basic savings bank deposit (BSBD) account with minimal paperwork, relaxed KYC, e-KYC, account opening in camp mode, zero balance & zero charges
- **Securing the unsecured -** Issuance of Indigenous Debit cards for cash withdrawals & payments at merchant locations, with free accident insurance coverage of Rs. 2 lakh
- **Funding the unfunded -** Other financial products like micro-insurance, overdraft for consumption, micro-pension & micro-credit

The scheme was launched based upon the following 6 pillars:

- Universal access to banking services – Branch and BC
- Basic savings bank accounts with overdraft facility of Rs. 10,000/- to every household
- Financial Literacy Program– Promoting savings, use of ATMs, getting ready for credit, availing insurance and pensions, using basic mobile phones for banking
- Creation of Credit Guarantee Fund – To provide banks some guarantee against defaults
- Insurance – Accident cover up to Rs. 1,00,000 and life cover of   Rs. 30,000 on account opened between 15 Aug 2014 to 31 January 2015
- Pension scheme for Unorganized sector

Extension of PMJDY

- **Focus shift from 'Every Household' to Every Unbanked Adult'**
- **RuPay Card Insurance -** Free accidental insurance cover on RuPay cards increased from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2 lakh for PMJDY accounts opened after 28.8.2018.
- **Enhancement in overdraft facilities –**
- OD limit doubled from Rs 5,000/- to Rs 10,000/-; OD upto Rs 2,000/- (without conditions).
- Increase in upper age limit for OD from 60 to 65 years

PMJDY Accounts

PMJDY Accounts (in Crore)
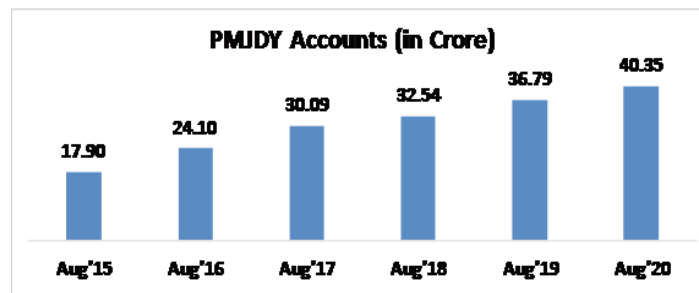
- Total PMJDY Accounts: 40.35 Crore
- Rural PMJDY accounts: 63.6%
- Women PMJDY accounts: 55.2%

Know! some statics achieved by PMJDY

- PMJDY account is treated as inoperative if there are no customer induced transactions in the account for over a period of two years
- Out of total 40.35 crore PMJDY accounts, 34.81 crore (86.3%) are operative
- Deposits have increased about 5.7 times with increase in accounts 2.3 times
- Avg. Deposit per account has increased over 2.5 times over Aug'15
- Number of RuPay cards & their usage has increased over time

Jan Dhan Darshak App

- A mobile application, was launched to provide a citizen centric platform for locating banking touch points such as bank branches, ATMs, Bank Mitras, Post Offices, etc. in the country.
- Over 8 lakh banking touchpoints have been mapped on the GIS App.
- This app is also being used for identifying villages which are not served by banking touchpoints within 5 km.