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science and technology

Gaganyaan

What is this?

- **Gaganyaan project envisages demonstration of human spaceflight capability by launching crew of 3 members to an orbit of 400 km for a 3 days mission and bring them back safely to earth, by landing in Indian sea waters.**

- The project is accomplished through an optimal strategy by considering inhouse expertise, experience of Indian industry, intellectual capabilities of Indian academia & research institutions along with cutting edge technologies available with international agencies. The pre-requisites for Gaganyaan mission include development of many critical technologies including human rated launch vehicle for carrying crew safely to space, Life Support System to provide an earth like environment to crew in space, crew emergency escape provision and evolving crew management aspects for training, recovery and rehabilitation of crew.

- Various precursor missions are planned for demonstrating the Technology Preparedness Levels before carrying out the actual Human Space Flight mission. These demonstrator missions include Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT), Pad Abort Test (PAT) and Test Vehicle (TV) flights. Safety and reliability of all systems will be proven in unmanned missions preceding manned mission.

Human rated LVM3 - HLVM3

- LVM3 rocket - The well proven and reliable heavy lift launcher of ISRO, is identified as the launch vehicle for Gaganyaan mission. It consists of solid stage, liquid stage and cryogenic stage. All systems in LVM3 launch vehicle are re-configured to meet human rating requirements and christened Human Rated LVM3. HLVM3 will be capable of launching the Orbital Module to an intended Low Earth Orbit of 400 km.

- HLVM3 consists of Crew Escape System (CES) powered by a set of quick acting, high burn rate solid motors which ensures that Crew Module along with crew is taken to a safe distance in case of any emergency either at launch pad or during ascent phase.

Orbital Module

- Orbital Module (OM) that will be Orbiting Earth comprises of Crew Module (CM) and Service Module (SM). OM is equipped with state-of-the-art avionics systems with adequate redundancy considering human safety.

- CM is the habitable space with Earth like environment in space for the crew. It is of double walled construction consisting of pressurized metallic Inner Structure and unpressurised External Structure with Thermal Protection System (TPS). It houses the crew interfaces, human centric products, life support system, avionics and deceleration systems. It is also designed for re-entry to ensure safety of the crew during descent till touchdown.

- SM will be used for providing necessary support to CM while in orbit. It is an unpressurized structure containing thermal system, propulsion system, power systems, avionics systems and deployment mechanisms.

Other:

Human safety is of paramount importance in Gaganyaan mission. In order to ensure the same, various new technologies comprising of Engineering systems and Human centric systems are being developed and realised.

Cerebral Palsy

What is?

• **Cerebral palsy (CP) is a group of disorders that affect a person's ability to move and maintain balance and posture.** CP is the most common motor disability in childhood. It is caused by damage to the developing brain, most often before birth.

Symptoms:

• **Muscle weakness or stiffness**

• **Poor coordination**

• **Difficulty walking or moving around**

• **Difficulty speaking**

• **Seizures**

• **Intellectual disabilities**

Caused by:

• Abnormal brain development or damage to the developing brain that affects a person's ability to control his or her muscles.

• A person with severe CP might need to use special equipment to be able to walk, or might not be able to walk at all and might need lifelong care. A person with mild CP, on the other hand, might walk a little awkwardly, but might not need any special help.

• All people with CP have problems with movement and posture. Many also have related conditions such as intellectual disability; seizures; problems with vision, hearing, or speech; changes in the spine (such as scoliosis); or joint problems (such as contractures).

Cure:

• There is no cure for CP, but treatment can improve the lives of those who have the condition.

Other:

• World Cerebral Palsy Day is observed on 6 October every year.

• The theme for World Cerebral Palsy Day in 2023 is "Together Stronger."

National Strategy on Robotics

Context:

India is making strides in key technological areas – from artificial intelligence to semiconductors to robotics.

The national strategy on robotics policy will present significant opportunities for the manufacturing sector, Industry 4.0 and cyber-physical systems among others, it has the potential to create a lot of impact.

Aim:

• To capitalize this potential and nurture the development of robotic technology, helping India emerge as a "Robotics Hub" for the world.

• To ensure the creation of domestic capabilities in robotic technology in India.

• To drive India's global leadership in Robotics, four sectors of strategic importance have also been identified, namely – manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare and national security.

• To invite all those in the robotics and AI ecosystem to contribute and make this a successful policy. This is in line with strategic planning and thinking for India AI.

• To further maximize the benefits of an AI-integrated society the National Strategy on Robotics has been envisaged as one such key component of IndiaAI.

- To enable India's emergence as a global leader in the development and adoption of robotics, a comprehensive, coherent, and efficient deployment of the National Strategy on Robotics is proposed to be undertaken as the 'National Robotics Mission'.

Key pillars:

- **Research and Development,**
- **Demonstration and Testing,**
- **Commercialization and Supply Chain Development,**
- **Adoption and Awareness.**

A royalty rate for lithium, niobium, and rare earth elements (REEs) has been approved by the Union Cabinet

- The Parliament recently passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023.
- The amendment permitted the sale of concessions for six minerals, including lithium and niobium, to the private sector through auction. These minerals were previously listed as atomic minerals.
- The amendment additionally stipulated that the **Central Government would auction off mining leases and composite licenses for 24 essential and strategic minerals, such as lithium, niobium, and rare earth elements (REEs) that do not contain uranium or thorium.**

Why have new royalty rates approved?

- The MMDR Act's Second Schedule lists the various minerals' royalty rates.

- Presently, the act establishes a royalty rate for minerals not expressly included in that Schedule of 12% of the average sale price (ASP). This rate is significantly higher than benchmarks used globally.
- Because of this, the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957's Second Schedule has been amended to specify new royalty rates.
- The aforementioned amendments serve to bring India's royalty rates into line with international standards and facilitate the commercial exploitation of these minerals through auctions, which may be held by the Central government or individual states.

What are Lithium, Niobium and Rare Earth Elements (REEs)?

- **Lithium:** It is an alkali metal. It is one of the key components in rechargeable batteries that find usage in mobiles, laptops, electric vehicles, and medical devices like pacemakers. It is also used in energy storage solutions.

- **Rare earth elements:** It refers to a group of 17-odd minerals that cover ones like scandium, yttrium, and cerium, among others. Most of these are used as catalysts and magnets, with the most common usage being in alloys, glass, electronics, petroleum extraction, electric motors of hybrid and EVS and wind turbines, among others.

- **Niobium:** It is a silvery metal with a layer of oxide on its surface which makes it resistant to corrosion.

- It is used in alloys, including stainless steel, to improve their strength, particularly at low temperatures.

- Alloys containing niobium are used in jet engines, beams and girders for buildings, and oil and gas pipelines. Given its superconducting properties, it is also used in magnets for particle accelerators and MRI scanners.

- The main source of Niobium is the mineral columbite, which is found in countries such as Canada, Brazil, Australia, and Nigeria.

Web portal 'Apna Chandrayaan'

- 'Apna Chandrayaan' is a web portal that was developed by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) to educate students about the Chandrayaan-3 mission. The portal offers a variety of engaging activities for students, including coloring books, online quizzes, jigsaw puzzles, picture creators and graphic novels.

- The portal was developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) under the aegis of the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education. The portal was launched in 2023.

- The portal is designed at three different levels:

  Elementary Level: This level is for students aged 6-8 years. This includes coloring pages, dot to dot matching activities, color coding with instructions, etc.

  Primary level: This level is for students aged 9-12 years. It contains educational material providing information about Chandrayaan-3 mission.

  Secondary level: This level is for students aged 13-18 years. It includes educational material providing more advanced information about the Chandrayaan-3 mission.

Objective:

- **The portal aims to help students learn about the Chandrayaan-3 mission and get excited about space exploration. This portal is a valuable resource that can help students learn about space science and technology.**

Benefits:

- **It helps students to learn about Chandrayaan-3 mission in an interesting and engaging way.**

- **It encourages students to learn more about space science and technology.**

- **It inspires students to participate in space exploration.**

"Made-In-India" 2KW DC Portable Charger to help Boost Electric Vehicle Adoption

- **The launch marks a significant step in contributing towards the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's (MeitY) mission of accelerating Electric Vehicle adoption in India, reducing the current dependence on imported charging solutions.**

- Currently a substantial portion of portable chargers utilized by OEMs are imported and arrive pre-programmed. Hence, they are not customizable in terms of voltage and current settings.

- Thermal and mechanical design play a major role in ensuring the proper functionality of the chargers. This further underlines the importance of developing Make-In-India chargers to aid in the proliferation of EVs in India.

- To address this challenge and increase local manufacturing, the 2KW charger has been designed and developed by CEET, IIT Madras and industrial partner Flowtrik Technologies with funding by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Govt of India.

- These chargers sporting an efficiency of >95% and functioning at a maximum operating ambient of 50 Degree Celsius are built with over-load, over-voltage, reverse polarity and in-built EMI/EMC filter. The chargers are designed to meet safety Standard IEC 60950-11.

- Charger design also includes optional provision to communicate with battery for adaptive charging based on battery requirements and hooks for IoT to enable live tracking of charging related parameters.

- Power output settings can be customized based on the volume of the manufacturing to suit the requirement of individual OEMs.

- Successful large-scale manufacturing of this technology can significantly make difference in the portable charger market.

DEFENCE

KAZIND

India-Kazakhstan Joint Military Exercise

Chanakya Defence Dialogue 2023

- The Indian Army in partnership with the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) is organising the Chanakya Defence Dialogue 2023.
- This is the first edition of an event of this nature organised by the Army and is being held in New Delhi.
- **It will focus on crafting a roadmap for collaborative security measures in the region to fortify India's position as a ready, resurgent, and relevant stakeholder among the nations in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific.**

EU-India naval exercise

- European Union (EU) and India conducted their first joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Guinea
- India and EU ships conducted joint activities in the Gulf of Guinea, in an effort to reinforce naval maritime security cooperation in support of the region.

Yashaswini

- The Central Reserve Police Force, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development, is organizing a cross-country bike expedition with "Yashaswini" a group of CRPF women bikers to celebrate women power or Nari Shakti of the country.
- In addition to promoting the Force's message of **"Desh Ke Hum Hain Rakshak",** the women bikers have also incorporated the social message of "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao", into their campaign. They would be proudly displaying the BBBP logo on their uniforms and banners, thereby endorsing the cause throughout the country.

Exercise Sampriti

annual bilateral military exercise conducted between **India and Bangladesh** and hosted alternatively by both countries.

Exercise Chakravat

- It is **an annual joint exercise** involving the participation of all three Services, Paramilitary Forces, as well as several disaster response organisations, NGOs, academic institutions and international organisations.
- since 2015
- The exercise has been conducted by the Indian Army, the Indian Navy (IN) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) in rotation.

Bharat NCX 2023

- National Security Council Secretariat organized the 2nd edition of the National Cyber Security Exercise 'Bharat NCX 2023' for government organizations and public and private sectors.
- The 2nd edition of the National Cyber Security Exercise 2023 'Bharat NCX 2023' will be conducted as a hybrid exercise with the aim to train senior management and technical personnel of Government/Critical Sector organizations and Public and Private agencies on contemporary cyber threats and handling cyber incidents and response.

National Maritime Search and Rescue Board (NMSAR)

- **A statutory body**
- **Stablished in 2002**
- under the Ministry of Shipping.
- Responsible for coordinating and executing maritime search and rescue (SAR) operations in the Indian Search and Rescue Region (ISRR).

- Chaired by the Director General of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG).
- The NMSAR Board also includes representatives from other government agencies, such as the Indian Navy, the Directorate General of Shipping, and the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Functions:

- **Developing and implementing national SAR plans and procedures**
- **Coordinating SAR operations with other agencies**
- **Providing training to SAR personnel**
- **Maintaining SAR equipment**
- **Raising public awareness about SAR**

INS Sagardhwani

- A marine acoustic research ship designed and developed by NPOL, Kochi and constructed indigenously by GRSE Ltd.
- The vessel has been engaging in extensive oceanic observing missions and research for the last 25 years.

Sagar Maitri

- DRDO initiative that supports the 'Safety and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)' vision.
- **DRDO initiated a scientific component named 'MAITRI (Marine and Allied Interdisciplinary Training and Research Initiative)'.**

Objective:

- To promote closer cooperation in socio-economic aspects as well as more significant scientific interaction, especially in ocean research among Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) countries.
- To establish long-term scientific partnerships and collaborations with Oman, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Myanmar, the eight IOR countries.
- It focuses on establishing long-term collaboration with IOR countries in the field of 'Ocean Research and Development'.
- In the SAGAR MAITRI programme, INS Sagardhwani will retrace the tracks of INS Kistna, which participated in the International Indian Ocean Expedition during 1962-65.

Sagar Kavach

- comprehensive Coastal Security Exercise
- involving all maritime security agencies was **conducted by the Indian Navy**

Global Maritime India Summit (GMIS)

- The Global Maritime India Summit (GMIS) 2023 was held in Mumbai.
- It was the third edition of the summit.
- Organized by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), Government of India.
- **Theme: Charting a Sustainable and Inclusive Maritime Future**
- **Key issues:** Decarbonization, Automation and digitalization, Multimodalism, Cruise tourism, Urban water mobility, Maritime professional services, and Maritime research, Education and Skill development.

Other Points:

- The launch of the 'Amrit Kaal Vision 2047', a blueprint for the Indian maritime blue economy.
- The signing of an MOU between the MoPSW and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for the development of offshore wind energy in India.

- The signing of an MOU between the MoPSW and the Ministry of Textiles for the promotion of coastal shipping for the transportation of textiles.
- The announcement of a new maritime skill development program by the MoPSW.
- The launch of a new maritime innovation fund by the MoPSW.

'IMPHAL' – Third Stealth Destroyer of Project 15B

The third Project 15B indigenous destroyer Imphal delivered to the Indian Navy.

About IMPHAL Destroyer:

- It was created by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), and it is the third stealth destroyer of Project 15B.
- The Kolkata class (Project 15A) destroyers that were commissioned in the previous ten years are being replaced by Project 15B.
- The Warship Design Bureau (WDB) of the Indian Navy created the ship.
- Imphal is one of the world's most technologically advanced warships.
- Imphal is a powerful and adaptable platform outfitted with cutting-edge armaments and sensors, including surface-to-air missiles, anti-ship missiles, and torpedoes.
- Its displacement is 7,400 tons, and its overall length is 164 meters. Imphal is capable of traveling at rates more than 30 knots (56 km/h).
- **About 75% of the ship's contents are from indigenous people. In November 2021, P15B's (Visakhapatnam) first ship was commissioned.**

First Military Heritage Festival

The inaugural Indian Military Heritage Festival was launched by Raksha Mantri. Through discussions, artwork, dance, drama, storytelling, and exhibitions, the two-day event seeks to honor India's rich military tradition and culture.

- Through panel discussions with renowned academics, professionals, and active and retired officers, it will primarily present various understandings and perspectives.
- **The event attempts to revitalize interest in the study of Indian military tradition, culture, and history while giving the "Make in India" and "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" programs real-world relevance.**
- It also offers a forum for discussion of numerous current topics affecting India and the rest of the globe, including security, policy, and foreign relations.
- **Project UDBHAV** was introduced by Raksha Mantri at the opening of the Military Heritage Festival
- Project UDBHAV, a partnership between the Indian Army and the USI, aims to rediscover the foundations of India's traditional military beliefs.
- The word "Udbhav," which means "origin" or "genesis," acknowledges the ancient writings and scriptures of our country that date back hundreds of years and contain profound knowledge that can aid contemporary military tactics.
- The Project's goal is to combine traditional knowledge with modern military tactics to create a special, comprehensive strategy for tackling contemporary security challenges.
- The Indian Army has launched a bold initiative that aims to combine traditional military pedagogy with cutting-edge wisdom.

Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC)

- The Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) is a triennial maritime security conference organized by the Indian Navy under the aegis of the Naval War College, Goa. The conclave brings together senior maritime security practitioners, scholars, and industry leaders from around the world to discuss key maritime security challenges and opportunities in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

- The theme of the conclave is "Maritime Security in the IOR: Navigating through the Challenges and Opportunities."
- The GMC is also expected to witness the signing of a number of maritime security agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between India and other countries in the IOR.
- The GMC is a significant event in the Indian Navy's outreach initiatives and is seen as a platform to build maritime security partnerships and cooperation in the IOR.
- In addition to the maritime security discussions, the GMC also features a "Make in India" exhibition showcasing the Indian Navy's indigenous shipbuilding capabilities. Visitors to the exhibition will also have the opportunity to witness indigenous warships and the capabilities of the Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV).

Features:

- Emerging maritime security threats in the IOR
- Maritime domain awareness and surveillance
- Maritime security cooperation and coordination
- Maritime law enforcement
- Maritime infrastructure protection
- Maritime cyber security
- Maritime pollution and environmental protection

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Economy

'Status Holder' certificates

- Union Commerce Minister unveiled system-based automatic 'Status Holder' certificates under Foreign Trade Policy 2023.

Why?

- Aiming to reduce transaction costs and improve the ease of doing business, the Union Commerce Ministry automated the system of giving credibility to Indian exporters in the international markets.

- **Status Holder certificates under the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023 are granted to exporters who have achieved a certain level of export performance.**

Benefits:

- Simplified procedures under the FTP

- Priority custom clearances on self-declaration basis

- Exemption from compulsory negotiation of documents through banks

- Exemption from filing Bank Guarantee for FTP schemes

Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission

What is this?

- An autonomous institution in ensuring the quality of drugs in India. It helps to protect the health and safety of consumers and to promote the competitiveness of the Indian pharmaceutical industry.

- **Under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.**

- **Established in 2009**

Objective:

- To publish and maintain the Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP), the official book of standards for drugs in India.

Functions:

- Developing and maintaining standards for herbal drugs

- Providing training on the IP and pharmaceutical quality control

- Conducting research on pharmaceutical quality control

- Collaborating with other national and international organizations on pharmaceutical quality control

Benefits:

- Ensures the quality of drugs in India

- Protects the health and safety of consumers

- Promotes the competitiveness of the Indian pharmaceutical industry

- Facilitates trade in pharmaceuticals

- Supports research and development in pharmaceutical quality control

Renewable Energy Project in Ladakh

Cabinet approves Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Phase-II – Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS) for 13 GW Renewable Energy Project in Ladakh.

- **Implementing agency- Powergrid.**

- The transmission line for evacuating this power will pass through Himachal Pradesh and Punjab up to Kaithal in Haryana, where it will be integrated with the National Grid.

- An interconnection is also planned from this project in Leh to the existing Ladakh grid so as to ensure a reliable power supply to Ladakh.
- It will also be connected to the Leh-Alusteng-Srinagar line to provide power to Jammu & Kashmir.

Benefits:

- **Developing long-term energy security of the country.**
- **Promotes ecologically sustainable growth by reducing carbon footprint.**
- **Will generate large direct & indirect employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled personnel in power and other related sectors, especially in the Ladakh region.**
- **Will contribute to achieving the target of 500 GW of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuels by 2030.**

Bharat Tex 2024

- The event "Bharat Tex 2024" will take place in New Delhi from February 26–29, 2024.
- With exhibitions, educational sessions, and buyer meets, "Bharat Tex 2024" is expected to be the biggest textiles event.
- **It's objective to highlight India's abilities along the entire textile value chain, from fiber to fashion.**
- In addition to positioning and showcasing India's entire textile value chain, Bharat Tex 2024 will also highlight the country's strengths in fashion, traditional crafts, and sustainability initiatives.

NLC India Limited has incorporated a wholly owned subsidiary called NLC India Green Energy Limited (NIGEL)

- **Under the Ministry of Coal, NLC India Limited is a Navratna Central Public Sector Undertaking.**
- The adoption of all renewable energy initiatives is NIGEL's main priority.
- According to CEA's 2030 Optimal Energy Mix Report, there will be a battery energy storage system (BESS) on the grid that will be about 41.65 GW in size.

Navratna Enterprise

- The public sector unit must receive a score of at least 60 out of 100 in the categories of net worth, net profit, total cost of production, total labor cost, total cost of services, capital employed, and PBDIT (Profit Before Depreciation, Interest, and Taxes) in order to qualify as a Navratna Company.
- Additionally, it must be a Miniratna.
- There ought to be four impartial board members for the corporation.
- Ø **Navratna Companies are permitted to make investments up to Rs. 1,000 crores without requesting express government consent.**
- Ø **They may even invest 15% of their net worth on a particular project or 30% of their net worth during the whole year, but without exceeding the [1] 1,000 crores limit.**

Nano DAP

What is Nano-DAP?

- The Nano DAP is expected to reduce the annual subsidy on non-urea fertilizers and provide significant benefits to everyone involved in the value chain.
- Nano DAP is the second product from the nano stable after nano urea, which the government is promoting to reduce subsidies and promote the efficient use of plant chemicals.
- **After urea, DAP is the second most widely used fertilizer in India. Out** of the estimated annual consumption of around 10-12.5 million tonnes, local production is around 4-5 million tonnes, while the rest is imported.

- Nano-DAP (Di-ammonium Phosphate) is a nanotechnology-based agri-input developed by the Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO).

Why is it important?

- It will have 8% nitrogen and 16% phosphorus compared to 18% nitrogen and 46% phosphorus contained in the conventional granular bag.

- A 500 ml bottle of nano-DAP is equal to a 50kg bag of regular DAP. The cost of a bottle of nano-DAP is ₹ 600 (without subsidy), while conventional DAP is priced at ₹ 1,350 per bag (with fertiliser subsidy).

Benefits:

- Higher crop yield:
- Increase in farmers' income
- nutritional food
- Environment friendly
- Reduction in the use of chemical fertilizers
- Easy to store and transport
- Reduction in subsidy burden

Elevating workspace efficiency

- Elevating workspace efficiency is essential for businesses of all sizes. By creating a more efficient workspace, businesses can improve productivity, reduce costs, and boost employee morale.

- Elevating workspace efficiency is an ongoing process. It's important to regularly review your workspace and identify areas where you can improve. By taking the time to make small changes, you can create a more efficient and productive workspace for yourself and your team.

What a business can do to elevate workspace efficiency:

- **Organize your workspace.** A cluttered workspace can lead to a cluttered mind. By taking the time to organize your workspace, you can reduce distractions and improve your focus. This could involve decluttering your desk, putting away unnecessary items, and creating a filing system for important documents.

- **Invest in ergonomic furniture.** Ergonomic furniture is designed to support your body and reduce fatigue. This can lead to improved comfort and productivity. When choosing ergonomic furniture, be sure to consider your individual needs and preferences.

- **Choose the right lighting.** Lighting can have a big impact on your mood and productivity. Too much light can be harsh and distracting, while too little light can make you feel tired and sluggish. Choose a lighting solution that provides adequate light without being too bright or too dim.

- **Encourage breaks.** It may seem counterintuitive, but taking breaks can actually improve your productivity. When you work for long periods of time without taking a break, your mind and body start to tire. This can lead to mistakes and decreased productivity. Take short breaks throughout the day to get up and move around, or to step outside for some fresh air.

- **Use technology to your advantage.** There are a number of technology tools that can help you to be more efficient in your work. For example, you can use project management software to track your progress and deadlines, or you can use communication tools to stay in touch with your team members.

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Environment

National Wildlife Week

- **69th Wildlife Week,** a significant event aimed at raising awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation in India.
- This year's theme, **"Partnerships for Wildlife Conservation,"** reflects the collaborative efforts required to protect and preserve the nation's rich biodiversity.
- Started by **National Zoological Park**

A Milestone Moment

- One of the most notable milestones associated with Wildlife Week is the opening of **Dachigam National Park** to the public during the 1981 celebration. This momentous decision allowed tourists and nature enthusiasts to explore the park's breathtaking biodiversity, including the iconic hangul or Kashmir stag. The exposure to Dachigam's unique wildlife contributed significantly to a greater understanding and appreciation of the region's natural heritage.

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)

- The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is a **not-for-profit** membership association that acts as a catalyst for the responsible development of travel and tourism to, from and within the Asia Pacific region.
- PATA membership comprises governments, state and city tourism bodies, international airlines and airports, hospitality organisations, educational institutions, and hundreds of travel industry companies in Asia Pacific and beyond.
- PATA is a leading voice on travel and tourism in the Asia Pacific region. The association works closely with governments, businesses, and other stakeholders to promote the responsible development of the industry. PATA also plays an important role in advocating for the interests of its members and the travel and tourism industry as a whole.

- PATA is a valuable resource for anyone involved in the travel and tourism industry in the Asia Pacific region. The association provides its members with a range of services and resources that can help them to grow their businesses and promote the responsible development of the industry.

  Mission: To enhance, encourage and assist in the development of the travel and tourism industry throughout the Pacific Asia area.

Services and resources:

- Research and statistics
- Advocacy and representation
- Networking and events
- Training and education

Ecomark Scheme

- **A** voluntary product labeling scheme **that identifies environment-friendly products.**
- **It administered by the Bureau of Indian Standards,** which is the national standards body of India.

Eligibility:

- A product must meet certain environmental criteria specified by the BIS.
- These criteria vary depending on the product category.

Benefits:

- It helps consumers to identify environment-friendly products.

- It encourages businesses to produce environment-friendly products.
- It reduces the environmental impact of consumer products.

Green Credit Program (GCP)

What is GCP?

- The GCP is a **market-based mechanism** that aims to incentivize individuals, organizations, and industries to undertake voluntary environmental actions.
- Participants can earn credits for undertaking activities that reduce their environmental impact.
- The GCP is a **voluntary program,** but it is expected to be attractive to a wide range of participants, including individuals, businesses, and government agencies.
- These credits can then be traded on a domestic market platform and can be purchased by individuals and organizations that are looking to offset their own environmental impact.
- The GCP can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve water quality, and protect biodiversity.

Benefits:

- Incentivizes voluntary environmental actions
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions
- Improves water quality
- Protects biodiversity
- Creates a market for environmental services
- Promotes sustainable development

Little Ice Age (LIA)

New Study:

- The common wisdom that the LIA was characterized by uniformly cold and dry weather with little monsoon rainfall is challenged by the latest study, which reveals **substantial fluctuations in rainfall patterns.**
- The study reconstructed pollen-based vegetation dynamics-, current climate change, and monsoonal variability from the Western Ghats between CE 1219 and 1942.
- Tropical moist/semi-evergreen/dry forests were primarily observed in the research area.
- The Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP), an independent institute under the Department of Science and Technology, carried out the research.

What is Little Ice age?

- The Little Ice Age (LIA) was a period of regional cooling, seen especially in the North Atlantic region, between the 16th and the 19th centuries (1671 CE – 1942 CE).
- An alternative time period of 1300 to 1850 has also been proposed.
- It is not a true ice age of global extent.

Parvati Kund and Jageshwar temples (Kumaon region, Uttarakhand)

Context: Prime Minister has encouraged people to visit the Parvati Kund and Jageshwar temples in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, emphasizing their natural beauty and spiritual significance.

- Located in the **Kumaun region of Uttarakhand's district Almora, Jageshwar is a Hindu pilgrimage town renowned for its collection of 125 historic temples that date from the 7th to the 14th century, most of which were built and renovated by the kings of the Katyuri dynasty. Many of these temples honor Lord Shiva, but there are others dedicated to other gods as well.**
- Jageshwar was the birthplace of Lord Shiva worship, according to the Linga and Skandha Puras, making it an important place of worship. Furthermore, Lakulisha Shaivism, a revivalist sect that honors Lord Shiva, had its center in the region.
- Religious celebrations like the Maha Shivratri Mela and the Jageshwar Monsoon Festival are also held there. The temples exhibit a blend of South/Central Indian and North Indian Nagara architectural styles.
- **Parvati Kund, located at an elevation of about 5,338 feet, is believed to be the place where Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati meditated.**

Kati Bihu

- Also known as, Kongali Bihu.
- **It is an Assamese festival celebrated to mark the time of relocation of rice saplings.**
- **Like the other Bihu festivals in Assam, is linked to agriculture.**
- Tulsi plant is worshipped on this day.
- The other two Bihu festivals in Assam are:
- Bhogali or Magh Bihu (celebrated in January)
- Rongali or Bohag Bihu (celebrated in April)

Best Tourism Village

- Gujarat's Dhordo village was awarded the 'Best Tourism Village' by UNWTO.

THE CORE IAS

Indian Polity

National Turmeric Board

The National Turmeric Board (NTB) is a statutory body established by the Government of India in 2023 under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

Why?

An apex body for the development and promotion of turmeric and turmeric products in the country.

The NTB is expected to play a key role in promoting the growth and development of the turmeric sector, and in increasing the awareness and consumption of turmeric and turmeric products around the world.

Functions:

• Promoting research and development in the turmeric sector

• Facilitating value addition and market access for turmeric products

• Increasing awareness of the health and wellness benefits of turmeric

• Promoting exports of turmeric and turmeric products

• Coordinating with other government agencies and stakeholders to promote the development of the turmeric sector

Structure:

• **It is governed by a Board of Directors, which is chaired by a chairperson appointed by the Central Government. The Board includes representatives from the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Ministry of AYUSH, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Spices Board, and other relevant organizations.**

• Headquartered in Kochi, Kerala, with regional offices in other major turmeric producing states.

Initiatives:

• Promoting the use of turmeric in food and beverages

• Developing new turmeric-based products, such as nutraceuticals and cosmeceuticals

• Increasing exports of turmeric and turmeric products to new markets

• Supporting farmers to improve their productivity and income

• Promoting research and development on new turmeric varieties and cultivation practices

Central Electricity Authority (CEA)

• Statutory organization under the Ministry of Power.

• Under the Electricity Act, 2003.

Functions:

• Advise the Central Government on matters related to national electricity policy.

• Specify technical standards for the construction of electrical plants, electric lines, and grid connectivity.

• Promote research in matters affecting the generation, transmission, distribution, and trading of electricity.

Mera Yuva Bharat

- **An autonomous body for the benefit of youth in the age group of 15-29 years.**
- It will serve as an overarching enabling mechanism powered by technology for youth development and youth-led development and provide equitable access to youth to actualise their aspirations and build Viksit Bharat across the entire spectrum of the Government.

Purpose:
- Improve leadership skills through experiential learning by shifting from isolated physical interaction to programmatic skills.
- To make it a whole of government platform for youth development.
- Investing more in youth to make them social innovators, and leaders in the communities.
- Setting the focus of the Government on youth-led development and to make the Youth "active drivers" of development and not merely "passive recipients".

District Mineral Foundations (DMFs)

What are these?
- District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) are **non-profit organizations** established under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015. DMFs are funded by a contribution of 10% of the royalty paid by mining companies to the state governments.

Objectives:
- Work for the interest and benefit of persons and areas affected by mining
- Promote the sustainable development of areas affected by mining
- Ensure that the benefits of mining are shared equitably with the people and areas affected by mining

Purposes:
- Development of infrastructure facilities, such as roads, schools, and hospitals
- Improvement of health and sanitation facilities
- Promotion of education and skill development
- Protection and restoration of the environment

- Sustainable development of the mining area
- Construction of schools, hospitals, and roads
- Provision of drinking water and sanitation facilities
- Promotion of education and skill development
- Afforestation and environmental restoration projects
- Sustainable development of mining areas through livelihood generation projects

Governance:
- A Board of Management chaired by the District Collector.
- Board of Management includes representatives from the state government, mining companies, and the local community.

Digital DARPG

- **Under the theme "Digital DARPG" the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances took several significant steps under the Special Campaign 3.0 to promote pan-India unified service delivery portals, reduce pendency in public grievances, adopt AI/Emerging Technologies for effective redressal of public grievances, promote sustainable practices and ensure cleanliness & efficient record management in the office.**

Amendment to the Aircraft Rules, 1937

- The Amendment to the aircraft rules, 1937 is a result of substantial consultations with stakeholders in the industry, aimed at providing the necessary reform measures to strengthen the existing regulatory safety and security framework. These amendments align India's aviation regulations with the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and international best practices.

- One of the key highlights of the Amendment to the Aircraft Rules, 1937 is the revision of Rule 39C. Under this amendment, the validity of licenses in relation to Airline Transport Pilot License (ATPL) and Commercial Pilot License (CPL) holders has been increased from five years to ten years. This change is expected to reduce administrative burden on pilots and aviation authorities like DGCA, promoting a more streamlined and efficient licensing process.

- The Amendment to Aircraft Rules, 1937 introduces key changes under Rule 66, addressing concerns related to the display of "false lights" in the vicinity of an aerodrome. This update clarifies that the term "light" encompasses lantern lights, wish kites, and laser lights. The government's jurisdiction over those exhibiting such lights has been extended from 5 kilometres to 5 nautical miles around an aerodrome. Furthermore, it is made explicit that the government possesses the authority to take action against individuals displaying lights that disrupt the safe operation of aircraft or pose hazards to the operating crew. Should such lights remain unattended for 24 hours, the government is empowered to enter the location and extinguish them. Simultaneously, the matter shall be reported to the relevant police station for legal action under the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

- When the source of the observed light is unidentifiable or if it shifts locations, the airport or airline operator is obligated to promptly report the incident to the local police station, initiating potential criminal proceedings.

- Rule 118 for validation of foreign licenses has been removed as being redundant. This change signifies aligning the regulations with the evolving needs of the aviation sector.

- A clause to liberalise the recency and competency requirements while ensuring continued competence for Air Traffic Controller License holders has been added under Schedule III. This change offers increased flexibility to accommodate situations with limited movements or watch hours, Air Traffic Controller license holders must complete a minimum of ten hours of simulated exercises, including emergencies. Subsequently, they must undergo a skill assessment for their respective rating within ten consecutive days of commencing these exercises.

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National/international
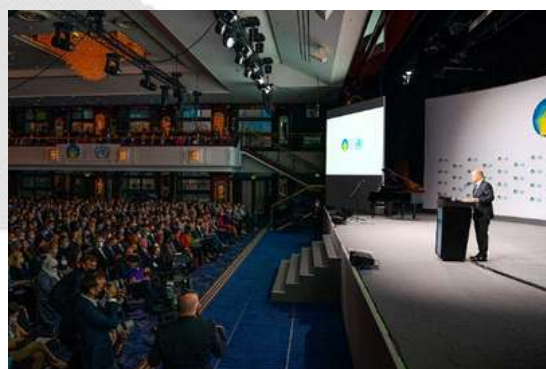
India Skills 2023-24

- IndiaSkills 2023-24 is a national skill development competition that will be held from August 4-10, 2023, at the India Expo Centre in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The competition will feature over 50 skills across a wide range of industries, including manufacturing, construction, IT, and healthcare.

- IndiaSkills 202324IndiaSkills is the precursor to the WorldSkills competition, which is the world's largest international skills competition. The winners of IndiaSkills 2023-24 will represent India at the WorldSkills competition, which will be held in Paris, France, in 2024.

- The IndiaSkills competition is organized by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in collaboration with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). The competition is open to Indian citizens between the ages of 18 and 25.

- The IndiaSkills competition is an important event for the Indian government as it helps to promote skill development and entrepreneurship among the youth. The competition also helps to identify and develop the skills of the Indian workforce, which is essential for the country's economic growth.

- The IndiaSkills 2023-24 competition is a great opportunity for young Indians to showcase their skills and compete against the best in the country. The competition is also a great opportunity for young Indians to learn new skills and develop their potential.

Objectives:

- **Promotion of Employable Skills:** The program underlines the importance of developing employable skills that **align with market needs,** increasing the acceptance of the workforce within the industry.

- **Addressing Skill Gaps:** It aims to **identify and bridge skill gaps by emphasizing the mapping of skills** needed in the industry, reducing the disparity between degrees earned and practical skills acquired.

- **Integration of Competencies and Knowledge:** Equal emphasis is placed on competencies, applied knowledge, and hands-on training to prepare individuals to lead effectively in the 21st century.

World Health Summit 2023

- The World Health Summit 2023, the leading global health conference and network, was held from October 15-17, 2023, in Berlin, Germany, and online.

- **The theme of the summit was "A Defining Year for Global Health Action."**

- **The summit brought together stakeholders from politics, science, the private sector, and civil society from around the world to set the agenda for a healthier future by inspiring innovative solutions for better health and well-being for all.**

- The summit also featured a number of special events, including a high-level panel on global health security, a ministerial roundtable on universal health coverage, and a youth forum on the future of health.

Central topics:

- Learning from COVID-19 for future pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

- Recommitting to universal health coverage.

- Sustainable health for people and the planet.

- G7/G20 measures to enhance global health equity and security.

- Harnessing the power of digital technologies for global health.
- World Health Organization's 75th anniversary.

Key outcomes:

- A commitment to strengthen global health security and pandemic preparedness.
- A renewed commitment to universal health coverage.
- A call for action to address the climate crisis and its impact on health.
- A recognition of the importance of digital technologies for global health.
- A commitment to work together to create a healthier future for all.

RuPay Domestic Card Scheme Agreement between India and the UAE

- NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has entered into a strategic partnership agreement with Al Etihad Payments (AEP) for Domestic Card Scheme (DCS) Implementation in UAE. AEP is an indirect subsidiary of the Central Bank of UAE (CBUAE). As per the agreement, NIPL and AEP will work together to build, implement, and operationalize UAE's national domestic card scheme.
- **The DCS will aim to facilitate the growth of e-commerce and digital transactions in the UAE, bolster financial inclusion, support the UAE's digitization agenda, increase alternate payment options, reduce the cost of payments, and enhance the UAE's competitiveness and position as a global payment's leader. The partnership aligns perfectly with NIPL's mission to offer its knowledge and expertise to assist other countries in establishing their own cost-efficient, and secure payment systems.**
- **The DCS solution is based on the principles of sovereignty, speed to market, innovation, digitization, and strategic independence. The DCS solution provided by NIPL consists of a RuPay stack and value-added services like fraud monitoring services and analytics. NIPL will also assist AEP in formulating the operating regulations for their domestic card scheme.**

- RuPay is an indigenous, highly secure, and widely accepted card payment network in India. RuPay cards have debit, credit, and prepaid propositions. More than 750 million RuPay cards are in circulation as of date. RuPay cards make up more than 60% of total cards issued in India, with every second Indian having a RuPay card now. These cards are issued through the entire banking spectrum, including public sector, private, and small banks.
- India's world-renowned Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) is driving massive transformation in the payment space. DPI framework includes digital identity, digital payments, and digital data exchange layers - a combination of these three is the force behind the fintech revolution in India. Simply speaking, in India, nearly every adult has access to banking services, a way to remotely authenticate themselves (through Aadhar), and access to the internet through efficient and affordable mobile connectivity.
- A combination of these factors makes India the third largest fintech ecosystem in the world, with rapidly surfacing unicorns. India has witnessed an exponential growth of 367% in customers participating in digital transactions in the last five years, with an active customer base of more than 340 million.

Nilwande Dam

- PM dedicated the Nilwande Dam in **Maharashtra's** Ahmednagar district.
- Nilwande Dam refers to two associated **gravity dams.**
- Both dams create a lower and upper reservoir for the 250 MW pumped-storage hydroelectric power station.
- The upper Nilwande dam is on the Pravara River, a tributary of the Godavari River. The lower Nilwande dam is 86 on the Shahi Nalla River.
- The dam work had started in 1970 but was delayed considerably.

- The dam is expected to benefit farmers in 182 villages in Ahmednagar and Nashik.

India-Japan Fund

What is it?

- **The India-Japan Fund is a $600 million joint investment fund between the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) of India and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).**
- **The fund was launched in 2023 to invest in infrastructure projects in India.**
- The fund is targeting investments in a variety of sectors, including energy, transportation, logistics, and water and sanitation. It is also interested in investing in projects that support sustainable development and climate action.
- The India-Japan Fund is a significant development for the India-Japan relationship, and it is expected to play a key role in promoting infrastructure development in India.
- **Types of projects that the India-Japan Fund may invest in are Renewable energy projects, Smart cities projects, Road and highway projects, Railway projects, Port and airport projects, Water and sanitation projects etc.**

Benefits:

- It will provide a new source of funding for infrastructure projects in India.
- It will help to improve the quality and efficiency of infrastructure in India.
- It will create jobs and boost economic growth in India.
- It will strengthen the India-Japan relationship.

North Koel Reservoir Project

- The North Koel Reservoir Project is an inter-state major irrigation project located in the Latehar and Garhwa districts of Jharkhand and the Aurangabad and Gaya districts of Bihar, India.
- **project started in 1972**
- **it was stopped in 1993 by the Forest Department, Government of Bihar to prevent the submergence of Betla National Park and Palamau Tiger Reserve.**

Aim:

- **To provide irrigation to drought-prone areas of Palamu & Garhwa districts in Jharkhand and Aurangabad & Gaya districts in Bihar.** The total command area of the project is 1,02,272 hectares, out of which around 76% is in Jharkhand and 24% hectares is in Bihar.
- The North Koel Reservoir Project is a significant development for the drought-prone areas of Jharkhand and Bihar. The project will provide irrigation to a large area of land, which will help to increase agricultural production and improve the livelihoods of farmers. The project will also help to reduce poverty and improve the socioeconomic conditions of the region.

Other benefits:

- Flood control
- Hydropower generation
- Fisheries development
- Tourism development

National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC)

- **It is a high-level committee set up by the Government of India to coordinate and manage the response to natural disasters and other emergencies.**
- **Chaired by the Cabinet Secretary and includes representatives from all relevant ministries and agencies, as well as state governments.**

Responsibilities:

- Monitoring the situation and assessing the need for assistance
- Deploying central resources to affected areas
- Coordinating the relief and rescue operations
- Ensuring the provision of essential services to affected people

- Providing financial assistance to affected states and individuals
- Recommending long-term measures to reduce the impact of future disasters

India-EU Trade and Technology Council

- The India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) is a high-level forum for dialogue and cooperation on trade and technology between India and the European Union. The TTC was launched in April 2022 and held its first meeting in May 2023.
- **The TTC is expected to play a key role in strengthening the India-EU relationship and in promoting trade and investment between the two sides. The TTC will also help to address common challenges, such as climate change and security.**

Focused issues:

- Trade in goods and services
- Digital trade and technology
- Investment
- Intellectual property rights
- Climate change and sustainable development
- Security and defense

Benefits:

- Increased trade and investment between India and the EU
- Enhanced cooperation on digital trade and technology
- Joint efforts to address climate change and other global challenges
- Strengthened security and defense cooperation
- Deeper understanding and mutual respect between India and the EU

Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)

India's first
Rapid rail unveiled: The 82-Km Long Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor will have 25 stations
82 Km Approx length of the corridor
55 Min Approx travel time from Meerut to Jangpura

- PM launched India's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.
- Prime Minister officially opened the priority portion of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor.
- He also signaled the departure of the Namo Bharat RapidX train, which runs between Sahibabad and Duhai Depot and inaugurates India's Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS).
- **It is the first semi-high-speed regional rail service in the nation.**

Features of the Delhi-Meerut RRTS:

- The train will be able to travel at a speed of 160 km/h.
- There is a train attendant as well.
- The premium coach is roomy, luxurious, and furnished with reclining, cushioned chairs that have charging ports for laptops and smartphones at each seat.

Japan-India Semiconductor Supply Chain Partnership

Context:

A Memorandum of Cooperation on Japan-India Semiconductor Supply Chain Partnership was approved by the Union Cabinet.

Specifics:

- The Indian Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry signed the Memorandum of Understanding in July 2023.
- Realizing the significance of semiconductors for the development of industries and digital technologies, the MoC seeks to deepen collaboration between Japan and India in order to improve the semiconductor supply chain.
- After it is signed, the agreement will be in effect for five years.
- **This MoC is a component of the government's initiatives to create a favorable atmosphere for the nation's electronics manufacturing industry.**
- **The Ministry is pushing for global collaboration in the cutting edge and developing fields of information technology.**

Global Conference on Cooperation in Enforcement Matters (GCCEM)

What is it?

- The Global Conference on Cooperation in Enforcement Matters (GCCEM) is a conference organized by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), India, in collaboration with the World Customs Organization (WCO).

- The GCCEM is a platform for law enforcement agencies from around the world to come together and discuss ways to enhance cooperation in the enforcement of customs and related laws.

- The GCCEM is being attended by over 75 delegates representing over 40 customs administrations and organizations from around the world. The conference is also being attended by senior representatives from the WCO Secretariat.

- The GCCEM is a significant event in the field of law enforcement cooperation. It is expected that the conference will lead to a number of concrete initiatives to enhance cooperation between customs administrations and other law enforcement agencies in the fight against illicit trade and other crimes.

Focus:

- Illicit trade in drugs, weapons, and other contraband
- Trade-based money laundering
- Smuggling and counterfeiting
- Tax evasion and fraud
- Cybercrime

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SCHEME

PRADHAN MANTRI ANUSUCHIT JAATI ABHUYDAY YOJANA

- Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhuyday Yojana (PM- AJAY) is a merged scheme of 03 Centrally Sponsored Scheme namely Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY), Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP) and Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana(BJRCY) and has been implemented since 2021-22 with an aim to reduce poverty of the SC communities by generation of additional employment opportunities through Skill development, income generating schemes and other initiatives and to improve socio-economic developmental indicators by ensuring adequate infrastructure and requisite services in the SC dominated villages.

The Scheme has three components:

1. Development of SC dominated villages into an "Adarsh Gram".

2. 'Grants-in-aid' for District/State-level Projects for socio-economic betterment of SCs that may include creation of infrastructure in SC dominated villages including those selected under Adarsh Gram component, construction of Hostels/ Residential schools, Comprehensive Livelihood Projects which may include components such as Skill development, related infrastructure development, financial assistance towards loans taken by beneficiaries for acquisition/creation of assets required for livelihood generation etc.

3. Construction of Hostels in higher educational institutions which are top-ranked as per the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) of Government of India and are funded by the Centre/State/UT Governments either fully or partially. Similarly, construction of hostels in schools which are either fully or partially funded by the Centre/State/UT Governments and recommended by the Ministry of Education

   Objectives of Adarsh Gram Component {erstwhile Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana} –

- **The objective of this component is to ensure integrated development of SC majority villages so that, inter alia, there is: Adequate infrastructure, all requisite infrastructure necessary for socio-economic development needs are to be provided under the Scheme.**

- The identified socio-economic indicators, known as Monitorable indicators, are to be improved so that the disparity between SC and non-SC population is eliminated and the level of indicators is raised to at least that of the National average.

- More specifically, all BPL SC families should have food and livelihood security, all SC children should complete education at least up to the secondary level, all factors leading to maternal and infant mortality are addressed and incidence of malnutrition, especially among children and women, is eliminated.

About Grants-in-aid for District/State-level Projects for Socio-Economic betterment of SCs {erstwhile scheme of Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Caste Sub Plan}

The scheme aims at socio-economic development of SCs through grants for following types of projects:

I. **Comprehensive Livelihood Projects:** Such projects which create an entire eco-system for producing sustainable income, or social advancement to the Scheduled Castes only shall be taken up. The projects should preferably be a combination of two or more of following:

- **Skill Development:** Skilling courses as per norms of MSDE. Related facilities and infrastructure for conducting Skill Development Activities conducted by the Government. Skill Development Institutions can also be funded.

- **Grants for creation/acquisition of assets for beneficiaries/households:** There shall be no standalone individual asset distribution under the scheme. However, if project has provision for acquisition/creation of assets for beneficiaries/ households needed for livelihood generation, financial assistance towards loans taken by the beneficiary for such acquisition/creation of assets, would be upto Rs.50,000 or 50% of the asset cost, whichever is less, per beneficiary/household.

- **Infrastructure development:** Development of infrastructure related to the project and also Hostels and residential schools.

II. Other infrastructure- Various other infrastructure development projects in SC majority villages.

Special Provisions:

- Upto 15% of the total Grants exclusively on viable income generating economic development schemes/programme for SC Women.
- Upto 30% of the total Grants utilized for infrastructure development
- Atleast 10% of the total funds for skill development
- Promote SC Women Cooperatives engaged in production and marketing of consumer goods and services.

Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 5.0

- It is a nationwide immunization drive.
- **A critical campaign for the health and well-being of children and pregnant women in India.**
- The success of the campaign will depend on the participation of all stakeholders, including parents, caregivers, and healthcare workers.

  Implemented by: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with state governments and other partners.

Objective:

- To reach children under the age of two and pregnant women who have missed out on their routine immunizations. IMI 5.0 is being conducted in three phases, with each phase lasting for four weeks.

- Focusing on improving the coverage of measles and rubella vaccinations, with the aim of eliminating both infections by 2023.
- The campaign is providing other routine vaccines, such as the polio vaccine, the pentavalent vaccine, and the BCG vaccine.

Strategies:

- Door-to-door vaccination
- Mobile vaccination teams
- Static vaccination centers
- Outreach activities in communities

Benefits:

- Reduced child mortality and morbidity
- Improved immunization coverage for measles and rubella
- Elimination of measles and rubella by 2023
- Protection against other preventable diseases
- Increased awareness of the importance of immunization

National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS)

- central sector scheme
- It covers government-aided and local body schools apart from the schools under the state government.
- The scheme is available on the National Scholarship Portal.

Objective:

- To offer scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to reduce the dropout rate from schools encouraging them to continue their studies at the secondary level.

Eligibility criteria:

- Students whose parental income from all sources is not more than ₹ 3,50,000 per annum are eligible to avail of the scholarships.
- The students must have a minimum of 55% marks or equivalent grade in the Class VII examination to appear in the selection test for the award of scholarship (relaxable by 5% for SC/ST students).

Digital India

- Digital India is a flagship program of the Government of India to transform India into a

digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

Digital India has three core components:

- **Infrastructure as a Utility:** This component aims to create a robust and ubiquitous digital infrastructure, including broadband connectivity, public Wi-Fi hotspots, and mobile connectivity.

- **Governance and Services on Demand:** This component aims to deliver government services electronically to citizens. It includes initiatives such as e-governance, e-health, and e-education.

- **Digital Empowerment of Citizens:** This component aims to empower citizens with digital literacy and skills. It includes initiatives such as Digital Literacy Mission and Skill India.

Digital India has had a significant impact on India's economy and society. It has helped to boost GDP growth, create jobs, and improve the delivery of government services. Digital India has also made it easier for businesses to operate and for citizens to access information and services.

Key Digital India initiatives:

- **BharatNet:** BharatNet is a rural broadband connectivity project that aims to connect all 600,000 gram panchayats in India with high-speed internet.

- **Digital Locker:** Digital Locker is a secure online repository where citizens can store and share their digital documents, such as PAN cards, Aadhaar cards, and driving licenses.

- **e-Sign:** e-Sign is a digital signature service that allows citizens to sign electronic documents using their Aadhaar cards.

- **MyGov:** MyGov is a platform for citizens to engage with the government and share their ideas and suggestions.

- **Aadhaar:** Aadhaar is a unique identification number assigned to every resident of India. Aadhaar is used for a variety of purposes, including government services, banking, and telecommunications.

- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI):** UPI is a real-time payment system that allows users to transfer money between bank accounts using their smartphones.

A-HELP' Programme

- The A-HELP (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) program is an initiative of the **Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and the Ministry of Rural Development.**
- Launched in 2023
- **Objective:** To empower women and improve livestock health and productivity in rural India. Under the A-HELP program, women members of self-help groups (SHGs) are trained as Accredited Agents for Health and Extension of Livestock Production.

Services:

- Providing primary healthcare services to animals
- Assisting in the prevention and control of livestock diseases
- Promoting artificial insemination and other breeding technologies
- Providing information on livestock management practices
- Linking farmers to government schemes and programs

Benefits:

- Improved livestock health and productivity
- Increased income for livestock farmers
- Empowerment of women

- Creation of employment opportunities in rural areas
- Reduced burden on government veterinary services

'Heartland Tripura' Project

- **The project aims to provide undergraduate students in Tripura's engineering and non-engineering sectors with new career and personal development prospects.** The project was started in collaboration with Deloitte India and the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), Agartala, and was supported by both the federal government and the state of Tripura.
- Through NIELIT-Agartala, the project will provide the state with a specific set of skill development certification courses. Additionally, it will offer selected professionals the chance to intern, ultimately opening the door for lucrative career chances after fulfilling the certification and internship requirements.
- A variety of modern technical and professional development abilities, including soft skills, internal audit, analytics, and cyber security, will be covered by the certification programs provided by the project.

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INDEX/REPORT

Road Accidents in India-2022

- The Annual Report on 'Road Accidents in India-2022" has been published by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. This report is based on the data/information received from police departments of States/UTs on calendar year basis in standardized formats as provided by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) under the Asia Pacific Road Accident Data (APRAD) base project.

- As per the report, a total of 4,61,312 road accidents have been reported by States and Union Territories (UTs) during the calendar year 2022, which claimed 1,68,491 lives and caused injuries to 4,43,366 persons. This marks an increase of 11.9% in accidents, 9.4% in fatalities, and 15.3% in injuries compared to the previous year.

- **The report underscores the urgency of adopting a comprehensive approach to address the contributing factors to these accidents, including speeding, reckless driving, drunken driving, and non-compliance with traffic regulations. It is crucial that we strengthen enforcement mechanisms, enhance driver education and training programs, and invest in improving the condition of roads and vehicles.**

- The Ministry is committed to implementing robust measures to curb road accidents. The Ministry is also working towards various aspects such as road user behavior, road infrastructure, vehicle standards, enforcement of traffic regulations, and the role of technology in accident prevention. As the road accidents are multi-causal in nature, requiring multi-pronged approach to mitigate the problems through concerted efforts of all agencies at both Central Government and State Governments. The Ministry, along with various other related organizations as well as stakeholders has formulated a multi-pronged strategy to address the issue of road safety focusing on all 4Es including Education, Engineering (both roads and vehicles), Enforcement and Emergency Care.

- Furthermore, the Ministry is actively involved in initiatives such as implementation of modern transportation systems, road safety audits, and international collaborations to learn from global best practices. Initiatives like the Electronic Detailed Accident Report (e-DAR) for real-time data analysis and automated vehicle inspection centers are also underway to combat road accidents.

- The "Road Accidents in India-2022" publication serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders in the realm of road safety. It offers in-depth insights into various aspects of road accidents, including their causes, locations, and their impact on different categories of road users. The report also sheds light on emerging trends, challenges, and the Ministry's road safety initiatives.

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OUR CLASSROOM RESULTS NOT OF INTERVIEW

JATIN JAIN
(Rank-91) UPSC CSE-2022

SHRUSTI
(Rank 165) UPSC CSE-2022

DAMINI DIWAKAR
(Rank 435) UPSC CSE-2022

AKANSHA
(Rank 702) CSE-2022

UPSC 2021-RANK 152
NEHA JAIN

ABHI JAIN
(Rank 282) 2021

VASU JAIN
(Rank 67) 2020

AKASH SHRISHRIMAL
(Rank 94) 2020

DARSHAN
(Rank 138) 2020

SHREYANSH SURANA
(Rank 269) 2020

ARPIT JAIN
(Rank 279) 2020

SANDHI JAIN
(Rank 329) 2020

RAJAT KUMAR PAL
(Rank 394)

SANGEETA RAGHAV
(Rank 2)-2018 UPPSC

PANKHURI JAIN
2018 UPPSC

ABHISHEK KUMAR
(Rank 38) 2018 UPPSC

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