

CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE-2018

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3D PRINTED HUMAN CORNEAS

CREATED AT NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

Why in News: Scientists from Newcastle University, UK have created world's first 3D printed human corneas (3D printed thin protective film over eye) that could solve problem of shortage of available eye donors and help millions of blind people gain sight again.

Important Points:

Cornea is outermost layer of the human eye. Its key function is to focus vision. It also barricades eyes against harmful dirt and bacteria. Damage to cornea from injury or infection can distort vision or even lead to blindness.

The 3D printed human corneas were produced using bio-ink solution consisting of healthy corneal stem mixed together with alginate and collagen. The combination of alginate (a gel derived from seaweed) and collagen helps to keep corneal stem cells alive and produces material of necessary dimensions which is stiff enough to hold its shape and soft

enough to be squeezed out nozzle of 3D printer.

Before printing the corneal replicas, researchers

scanned patients' eyes to ascertain the necessary

dimensions and coordinates. While it's likely patients will have to wait "several years" before these

3D-printed corneas are available in an official capacity, they still represent incredible hope for those with more severe corneal-related impairments.

A 2016 survey of corneal transplants globally found that only one cornea transplant was available for every 70 needed. The study's authors concluded that bioengineering could be an "essential" part of relieving this need. That's where 3D printing comes in.

About 3D Printing:

3D printing is a manufacturing process through which three-dimensional (3D) solid objects are created. It enables the creation of physical 3D models of objects using a series of additive or layered development framework, where layers are laid down in succession to create a complete 3D object.

RUPAY CARD, BHIM AND SBI APPS

LAUNCHED IN SINGAPORE

Why in News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched three Indian digital payment systems - RuPay, BHIM app and UPI by SBI at the 'Business, Innovation and Community Event' in Singapore. With the launch, India's RuPay digital payments system was linked up with Singapore's 33-year old Network for Electronic Transfers (NETS).

Important Points:

The move will enable RuPay users to make payments at all of NETS acceptance points across Singapore.

Whereas, holders of Singapore NETS will be able to make online purchase on any National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) e-commerce merchant website in India, using 2.8 million RuPay point of sale terminals in India.

The development is significant, as it would create multi-billion dollar transactions as some five million Indians travel to and transit through Singapore, internationalising the RuPay beginning with the first cross border usage.

Classic IAS ACADEMY

UPI by SBI

During the business event, SBI launched Singapore-based AP-based rupee despatch arrangement. It is easy for Indian workers working in Singapore to send money through this app.

State Bank of Singapore has six branches and Auto teller machines (ATMs).

This service will be available to all Savings Account holders of SBI Singapore. The UPA is a new method of online payment initiated by the Indian National Payment Corporation and the Reserve Bank of India.

About BHIM App

Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) is a payment app that allows a user to make simple, easy and quick transactions using Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

The user would be able to make direct bank payments to anyone on UPI using their UPI ID or scanning their QR with the BHIM app.

The user can also request money through the app from a UPI ID.

The app was developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to bring in financial inclusion to the nation and to create a digitally empowered society.

About Rupee card

The rupee card is an ATM card based on India's indigenous payment system.

It is used like Visa and MasterCard.

Currently, visa and master card debit cards and credit cards are in circulation for payment in the country. These cards are based on the foreign payment system. The rupee card was developed in April 2011. It has been developed by the Indian National Payment

Corporation (NPCI). NPCI started the RuPay service in April 2013, whereas it is usually five to seven years for the card payment network to fully work.

17 banks assist in rupee card project

ANDHRA PRADESH CHANGES ITS STATE'S SYMBOLS



Explaining the reasons for announcing the new symbols, the department stated that the government of Andhra Pradesh felt that it is necessary to have a separate set of symbols for the state of Andhra Pradesh after bifurcation of the combined state.

New state symbols

State bird: Rose-ringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*). Locally known as Rama Chiluka.

State tree: Neem (*Azadirachta indica*). Locally known Vepa Chettu.

State animal: Black-buck (*Antilope cervicapra*). Locally known as Krishna Jinka.

State flower: Jasmine (*Jasminum officinale*). Its adoption will promote jasmine, which is grown commercially in Guntur, Prakasam, Kurnool, Kadapa, Anantapur and Chittoor districts of state.

Why in News: Andhra Pradesh has notified its separate state symbols post-split and creation of Telangana in 2014. The move comes four years after unified Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated into two states- Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in June, 2014. These states symbols were notified by State department of environment, forest, science and technology.

State symbols of Telangana

State bird: Indian Roller (coracias benghalensis) or Palapitta. It also state bird of Odisha and Karnataka.

State tree: Jammi Chettu (prosopis cineraria).

State animal: Jinka or spotted deer.

State flower: Tangidi Puvvu (senna auriculata). It is widely used in the state's famous Bathukamma festival.

Importance:

Andhra Pradesh has, however, retained undivided AP's symbol of state animal-Krishna Jinka or blackbuck- as its state animal. Telangana had dropped it to adopt spotted deer as its state animal.

The most notable change was in the symbol of the state bird. While the state bird of undivided Andhra Pradesh was Indian Roller or Palapitta, the bifurcated Andhra Pradesh changed it to Rama Chiluka or rose-ringed parakeet. Palapitta is now the state bird of Telangana, Odisha and Karnataka.

Another notable change was in the state flower, as though undivided AP had water Lilly or Kaluva as the state flower, both divided AP and Telangana dropped it.

The state tree of unified AP -neem was also retained by bifurcated AP, while Telangana adopted Jammi Chettu, which has cultural significance in the region.

NATIONAL WOMEN COMMISSION LAUNCH DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAMME

Why in News: Social networking giant Facebook partnered with the National Commission for Women (NCW) to launch a Digital Literacy Programme.

The Digital Literacy Programme will be launched in collaboration with the Cyber Peace Foundation (CPF). Cyber Peace Foundation is a Ranchi, Jharkhand-based civil society organisation involved in training related to all aspects of cyber security.

Important Points:

These interactive sessions will provide training on safe and responsible use of the internet, social media and email.

The programme will enable the trainees to differentiate between credible and questionable information.

As part of the digital literacy programme, awareness training will be conducted for 60000 women in universities across major cities in Haryana, Delhi-NCR, Manipur, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu over a one-year period.

CPF's volunteers will effectively work with women's groups to educate them and raise awareness on online safety.

The training will be conducted in local languages. NCW partnered with Facebook to educate and train

women about safe use of internet. Facebook truly believes that 'Economies can grow well with the equal participation from women' and this can fundamentally happen with the free and

unconstrained presence of women on the internet.

With the evolution of internet age, opportunities for women are increasing immensely. However, with more women going online, the National Commission for Women has witnessed a surge in cyber crime related complaints registered at the commission in the past three years.

Women are vulnerable to cybercrimes, fake news, hate speeches and cyber bullying which can have a disastrous effect on them.

This calls for the protection of women, when they are online in a manner which enables them to freely express themselves and share their views.

About National Commission for Women (NCW):

NCW is a statutory body established under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990. It was established in January 1992 to review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women. It recommends remedial legislative measures, advise Government on all policy matters affecting women and facilitate redressal of grievances related to women.

INDIA'S FIRST ADVANCED FORENSIC LAB DEVOTED TO WOMEN RELATED CASES

Why in News: Foundation of Sakhi Suraksha Advanced DNA Forensic Laboratory was laid in the campus of Central Forensic Science Lab (CFSL), Chandigarh. It is India's first advanced forensic lab dedicated for crimes related to women for timely deliver justice.

Important Points:

The advanced lab in par with international standards will contribute to address gap in forensic DNA analysis of pending sexual assault cases in the country. The lab has been set up as model forensic lab and will be replicated in other parts of the country.

Chandigarh is less than 160 cases per year and the Sakhi Suraksha Advanced DNA Forensic Laboratory is estimated to increase the capacity to 2000 cases per year.

5 more such advanced forensic labs will come up in Mumbai, Chennai, Guwahati, Pune and Bhopal in the next 3 months bringing total minimum annual handling capacity of labs to 50000 cases.

The labs in Chennai and Mumbai will be set up with funds from Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) while remaining 3 labs would be set up with funds by Ministry of Home Affairs.

At present there are 6 Central Forensic Science Labs (CFSLs) in Chandigarh, Guwahati, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Pune and Bhopal and one State Forensic Science Lab in each State/UT. These labs are responsible for conducting forensic analysis of all cases in the country including sexual assault, criminal paternity and homicide.

Units of Sakhi Suraksha Advanced DNA Forensic Laboratory

There are four units viz. sexual assault and homicide unit, paternity unit, human identification unit and mitochondrial unit. Apart from Homicide and Sexual Assault and Unit, other three units are interlinked. They will work to examine cases related to crime against women.

Paternity Unit: It will help in solving cases related to criminal paternity, gender selection and child swapping in hospitals.

Human Identification Unit: It will play important role to solve cases of missing person or children.

Mitochondrial Unit: It will conduct mitochondrial DNA analysis in cases where regular Nuclear DNA analysis is not possible such as in case of highly degraded samples. It can also be used to better explore family relationships.

In sexual assault cases, the ideal time frame to complete the examination and submission of report is 90 days. Furthermore, it is important that the biological crime exhibit is stored and preserved in scientific manner so as to make any examination/ reporting meaningful. However, presently such a storage/preservation capacity is around 200 cases in CFSL, Chandigarh.

Background :

Forensic science plays a vital role in the criminal justice delivery system by providing investigators with scientifically based information through the analysis of physical evidence. With increasing reports of crime against women such as sexual assault, foeticide, homicide etc. there is an increasing demand for better scientific analysis of physical evidence. Scrutiny by Hon'ble courts demands more admissible, accurate and powerful forensic proof for human individualisation.

ONLINE ANALYTICAL TOOL TO MONITOR FCRA

Why in News: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) launched an Online Analytical Tool to facilitate closer monitoring of the flow and utilisation of foreign contributions received by various organisations registered or permitted under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010.

Important Points:

This web-based tool enables decision-makers in various Departments of Government to scrutinise source of foreign funds and their actual use in India. It gives them capacity to take data-driven and evidence-based decisions regarding the compliance of the provisions of the FCRA, 2010.

It has analytical features to conduct big data mining and data exploration. Its dashboard will be integrated with the bank accounts of the FCRA-registered entities through the Public Financial Management System for updation of transactional data on a real-time basis.

The web-based tool will help to effectively monitor hundreds of thousands of transactions undertaken by such organisations and help stakeholders in Government to better regulate acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions.

About Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010:

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 came into effect on May 1, 2011.

It aims to consolidate the law to regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality by certain individuals, associations or companies and to prohibit acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality for any activities detrimental to the national interest.

FCRA 2010 provides for regulation of acceptance of foreign funds/foreign hospitality by certain individuals, associations, organisations and companies.

Any association granted prior permission or registered with the Central Government under Section 6 or under the repealed FCRA, 1976, shall be deemed to have been granted prior permission or registered, as the case may be, under FCRA, 2010 and such registration shall be valid for a period of five years from the date on which the new Act has come into force.

While the provisions of the repealed FCRA, 1976 have generally been retained, the FCRA, 2010 is an improvement over the repealed Act as more stringent provisions have been made in order to prevent misutilisation of the foreign contribution received by the associations.

on items for food/prasad/langar/bhandara offered free of cost by charitable religious institutions.

Background:

There are approximately 25,000 active organisations registered under FCRA, 2010. Such organisations have received foreign contributions worth Rs. 18,065 crores from foreign donors for various social, cultural, economic, educational and religious activities in 2016-17. Each FCRA-NGO conducts multiple financial transactions in receiving and spending foreign contribution.

MANIPUR TO GET INDIA'S FIRST SPORTS UNIVERSITY

Why in News: President Ram Nath Kovind has given his assent to the Union Cabinet's approval on an ordinance to set up the country's first national sports university in Imphal (Manipur).

Important Points:

The University would help provide a boost to sports activities in the country and also improve the country's sports performance at the national and international levels. It will also lead to employment generation.

The specialised University, first of its kind, will aim to promote sports education in the areas of sports sciences, sports technology, sports management and sports coaching.

It will also function as a national training centre for select sports disciplines by adopting the best international practices.

The National Sports University Ordinance, 2018 will be along the lines of the National Sports University Bill, 2017.

The approval of the ordinance will pave way for the set up of the country's first National Sports University with headquarters at Manipur.

Background:

The proposal was formally announced by the finance minister in his budget speech of 2014-15. For setting up the university, 325.90 acres of land has been made available by the Government of Manipur in the west Imphal district of Koutruk.

SEVA BHOJ YOJNA

Why in News: The Union Ministry of Culture introduced a new scheme called 'SevaBhojYojna' to reimburse the central share of CGST and IGST

The scheme has been launched for financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20 with a total outlay of Rs. 325.00 crores.

About the Yojana:

The main objective of the scheme is to lessen the financial burden of such charitable religious institutions, which provide free of cost without any discrimination to the general public and devotees.

The scheme seeks to reimburse the central government's share of Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) and Integrated Goods and Service Tax (IGST) on purchase of raw items such as ghee, edible oil, atta, maida, rava, flour, rice pulses, sugar and jaggery, which go into preparation of food/prasad/ langar/bhandara offered free of cost by religious institutions.

The institutions that have been in existence for at least five years before applying for financial assistance/grant.

The institutions that serve free food to at least 5000 people in a month.

The charitable religious institutions including temples, gurudwara, mosque, church, dharmik

ashram, dargah, monasteries, which fulfill the following criteria are eligible for the grant:

The institutions covered under Section 10(23BBA) of the Income Tax Act or those registered as Society under Societies Registration Act (XXI of 1860) or as a Public Trust under any law for the time being in force of statutory religious bodies constituted under any Act or institutions registered under Section 12AA of Income Tax Act.

Important Points:

The Ministry of Culture would be registering the eligible charitable religious institutions for a time period ending with finance commission period and subsequently, the registration may be renewed by the Ministry after the performance evaluation of the institutions.

The details of the registered institutions would be made available on an online portal for the viewership of the public, GST authorities and the entity or institution itself.

The entity/institution will be permitted to submit the reimbursement claim of the GST and Central Government share of IGST to the designated authority of GST Department at the state level in the prescribed format during the validity of registration.

The institution would be required to intimate the Ministry regarding any changes being made in the Memorandum of Association, office bearers or addition/deletion of the location of the free food services.

All the eligible institutions would also be required to be registered with the Darpan portal. A committee constituted for the purpose within four weeks would be examining all the applications along with supporting documents received from the institutions in the Ministry.

On the basis of the recommendation of the committee, a competent authority in the Ministry shall register charitable religious institutions for reimbursing claim of CGST and central government share of IGST paid on above mentioned specific items.

INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TESTS NUCLEAR-CAPABLE AGNI-5 MISSILE

Why in News: India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed nuclear capable long range ballistic missile Agni-5 with a strike range of 5,000 km from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast. The surface-to-surface missile was launched with the help of a mobile launcher from launch pad-4 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Dr Abdul Kalam Island in the Bay of Bengal. This was the sixth trial of the state-of-the-art Agni-5.

Important Points:

All the radars, electro-optical tracking stations and telemetry stations tracked the vehicle all through the course of the trajectory. The launch was reported to have achieved all its mission objectives. This was the sixth trial of the state-of-the-art missile

Agni-5, which covered its full distance during the test.

Unlike other missiles of the series, Agni-5 is the most advanced in terms of navigation and guidance,

warhead and engine.

Several new technologies were successfully tested during the Agni-5 trial.

The navigation systems- very-high accuracy Ring Laser Gyro-based Inertial Navigation System and the modern and highly-accurate Micro Navigation System ensured that the missile reached within a few metres of the target.

The missile comprised a high-speed onboard computer and fault tolerant software along with robust and reliable bus, which were able to guide it flawlessly.

About Agni 5:

The first test launch of the missile was conducted on April 19, 2012. The missile was able to hit the target nearly at pin-point accuracy, within a few metres of the designated target point.

India conducted the second test flight of Agni-V from the Wheeler Island on September 15, 2013. The missile hit the pre-designed target in the Indian Ocean with an accuracy of a few metres.

The third successful test flight of the Agni-V was conducted on January 31, 2015. The test used a canisterised version of the missile, mounted over a Tatra truck.

The fourth test of the missile was successfully conducted on December 26, 2018. This was the second canisterised test of the missile.

The fifth test of the missile was successfully conducted on January 18, 2018. This was the third consecutive canisterised test of the missile on a road-mobile launcher and the first in its final operational configuration. The missile covered a distance of 4,900 km in 19 minutes.

Agni-V is an intercontinental ballistic missile developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India.

The missile is a part of the Agni series of missiles, one of the missile systems under the original Integrated Guided Missile Development Program.

The Agni series includes Agni-1 with a range of 700-900 km, Agni-2 with 2000-3000km range, Agni-3 and Agni-4 with 3000 km to more than 4000 km range.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2018

Why in News: India, a country that ranks third from the bottom in the global Environmental Performance Index, is hosting the World Environment Day this year, on June 5.

World Environment Day is the United Nations' (UN) most important day for encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the protection of our environment. Since it began in 1974, it has grown to become a global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated in over 100 countries. World Environment Day is the "people's day" for doing something to take care of the Earth.

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The theme of the World Environment Day 2018 was 'Beat Plastic Pollution'.

Plastic makes up 10 per cent of all of the waste generated in the world.

The theme 'Beat Plastic Pollution' is a call to action to reduce the heavy burden of plastic pollution on natural places and wildlife. 'Beat Plastic Pollution' urges governments, industry, communities, and individuals to reduce the production and excessive use of single-use plastic polluting the oceans, damaging marine life and threatening human health.

Plastic is a huge environmental and health issue and the day was observed with the main focus on creating mass awareness about the hazards of plastic pollution.

Important Points:

Every World Environment Day has a different global host country, where the official celebrations take place. The focus on the host country helps highlight the environmental challenges it faces and the effort it supports to address them.

Various events were held across India to observe the Day including cleanliness campaigns by state governments, cleaning of 24 beaches and 24 rivers in 19 states, social media campaigns and mini-marathons like 'Envithon' in five cities besides Delhi.

Indian Railways introduced complete biodegradable containers #BeatPlasticPollution for serving of breakfast and meals in several Shatabdi and Rajdhani Trains.

12000 students & Officials from CRPF and ITBP took part in 'Envithon' to Beat Plastic Pollution.

A team of CISF personnel carried out cleanliness drive in Odisha.

STEM (Save The Earth Movement), promoted the use of cloth bags over plastic bags.

Gujarat launched the 'Plastic-waste free Gujarat' drive.

Indian city of Hyderabad announced to go single-use plastic free by 2022.

Important Facts on Plastic Pollution:

Every year, world uses 500 billion plastic bags and

at least 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans, the equivalent of a full garbage truck every minute.

50 percent of the plastic we use is single-use or disposable plastic.

Over 1 million plastic bottles are purchased in every one minute.

About World Environment Day (WED):

World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated every year on June 5.

The day is celebrated to bring environmental concerns into the mainstream of the national developmental effort and also to bring people to the front of environmental conservation.

The day, which began in 1974, is a flagship campaign for raising awareness on emerging environmental issues from marine pollution to global warming, to wildlife crime and sustainable consumption. For the year 2017, Canada was the Global Host country for the celebrations of World Environment Day.

About United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), organization established in 1972 to guide and coordinate

environmental activities within the United Nations (UN) system. UNEP promotes international cooperation on environmental issues, provides guidance to UN organizations, and, through its scientific advisory groups, encourages the international scientific community to participate in formulating policy for many of the UN's environmental projects. Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, the organization also has encouraged participation by the private sector to promote the sustainable use of the world's natural resources.

KRISHI KALYAN ABHIYAAN

Why in News: The Union Ministry of Agriculture and farmers' welfare has launched the Krishi Kalyan Abhiyaan from June 1, 2018 till July 31, 2018 to aid, assist and advice farmers on how to improve their farming techniques and raise their incomes.

The Krishi Kalyan Abhiyaan will be undertaken in 25 Villages with more than 1000 population, each in 111 Aspirational Districts identified in consultation with Ministry of Rural Development as per directions of NITI Ayog. In the districts where the number of villages (with more than 1000 population) is less than 25, all villages will be covered.

Important Points:

An action plan comprising specifically identified activities under various departments of the ministry namely, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW), Animal Husbandry Dairying & Fisheries (DAHD&F) and Department of Agricultural Research & Education (DARE-ICAR) will be implemented to saturate the chosen 25 villages in each district with these activities.

The overall coordination and implementation in the 25 villages of a district will be done by Krishi Vigyan Kendra of that district.

Further, 111 officers have been made in-charge of one district each for overall coordination and field level monitoring.

The officers have been selected from subordinate/ attached/autonomous organisations/PSUs of the Agriculture Ministry.

Various activities to promote best practices and enhance agriculture income are being undertaken under this plan such as:-

Distribution of Soil Health Cards to all farmers

100% coverage of bovine vaccination for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in each village

100% coverage of Sheep and Goat for eradication of Peste des Petits ruminants (PPR)

Distribution of Mini Kits of pulses and oilseeds to all

Distribution of Horticulture/Agro Forestry/Bamboo plant @ 5 per family(location appropriate)

Making 100 NADAP Pits in each village Artificial insemination saturation

Demonstration programmes on Micro- irrigation

Demonstrations of integrated cropping practice

In addition, demonstration programmes on Micro

Irrigation and Integrated Cropping Practice will also take place so as to familiarize farmers with the latest techniques and how they can be incorporated at the grass root level.

Training programmes are being conducted in each of the villages by ICAR/KVSs for Bee Keeping, Mushroom cultivation and Kitchen garden. Women participants and farmers will be given preference for the training program.

AMENDMENTS TO WIDEN THE SCOPE OF INDECENT REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN (PROHIBITION) ACT (IRWA), 1986

Why in News: Based on the observations made by Parliamentary Standing Committee and recommendation made by the National Commission for Women on the basis of consultation with civil society groups and likeminded individuals, WCD has proposed amendments in IRWA keeping in mind the recent technological advancement in the field of communications such as social media platforms, over the top services etc.

Important Points:

The Government of India has enacted the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (IRWA), 1986 to prohibit indecent representation of women through advertisements, publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner.

Since the enactment of the Act, technological revolution has resulted in the development of new forms of communication, such as internet, multi-media messaging, cable television, over-the-top (OTT) services

and applications e.g. Skype, Viber, WhatsApp, Chat On, Snapchat, Instagram etc.

Keeping in mind these technological advancements, it has been decided to widen the scope of the law so as to cover such forms of media on one hand and to strengthen the existing safeguards to prevent indecent representation of women through any media form on the other.

Hence, the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Amendment Bill, 2012 was introduced in Rajya Sabha December, 2012 which referred the Bill to Department related Parliament Standing Committee for consideration.

The reformulated Bill proposes following amendments in the parent Act:

Amendment in definition of term advertisement to include digital form or electronic form or hoardings, or through SMS, MMS etc

Amendment in definition of distribution to include publication, license or uploading using computer resource, or communication device or in

Insertion of a new definition to define the term publish

Amendment in section 4 to include that No person shall publish or distribute or cause to be published or cause to be distributed by any means any material which contains indecent representation of women in any form:

Penalty similar to that provided under the Information Technology Act, 2000

Creation of a Centralised Authority under the aegis of National Commission of Women (NCW). This Authority will be headed by Member Secretary, NCW, having representatives from Advertising Standards Council of India, Press Council of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and one member having experience of working on women issues.

This Centralised Authority will be authorized to receive complaints or grievances regarding any programme or advertisement broadcasted or publication and investigate/ examine all matters relating to the indecent representation of women.

SUPREME COURT ALLOWS CENTRE TO GO AHEAD WITH RESERVATION IN PROMOTION

Why in News: The Supreme Court allowed the Centre to go ahead with reservation in promotion for employees belonging to the SC and ST category in "accordance with law". The top court took into account the Centre's submissions that the entire process of promotion has come to a standstill due to the orders passed by various high courts and the apex court had also ordered for status quo in a similar matter in 2015.

Important Points:

The case is still sub judice in Supreme Court. A constitutional bench will examine the issue as to

whether the M Nagaraj judgement, which dealt with the issue of application of the 'creamy layer' for reservation to SC and ST categories in promotion in

government jobs, should be re-examined or not.

Reservations in promotions are mandated by Article 16 (4A) of the constitution. This article is an enabling provision and enables the state to provide for reservation in matters of promotion to SC/ST which in its opinion were not adequately represented in the services.

Background

With respect to the reservation in promotions in government jobs, the Supreme Court verdict in M Nagaraj Case (2006) that concept of creamy layer is not applicable to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Two earlier cases viz. Indra Sawhney Case (1992) and E V Chinnaiah versus State of Andhra Pradesh (2005) had dealt with the issue of creamy layer for Other Backward Classes. On this basis, the centre had issued an order in 2017 extending reservation in promotions to SC and ST employees beyond five years from November 16, 1992. This government order was challenged in Delhi High Court. The Delhi High Court quashed the Central Government order and thus, the promotions came to a standstill.

Central Government later approached Supreme Court for relief and the current SC order provides that much needed relief to Centre.

The Delhi High Court, in its August 23 last year verdict, had set aside an August 1997 office memorandum issued by the Department of Personnel and Training

(DoPT) on the issue of reservation in promotion to the employees belonging to SC/ST.

MUMBAI PEOPLE WORK MOST IN THE WORLD: SURVEY

Why in News: According to Switzerland's Investment Bank UBS study, an average employee in Mumbai works 3,315 hours a year, the most among 77 major cities of the world, according to a study by Swiss investment bank UBS. Mumbaikars work more than twice as much as major European cities like Rome (1,581 hours) or Paris (1,662 hours). Mumbai was followed by Hanoi, Mexico City, New Delhi and Bogota.

Important Points:

In this case Hanoi (Vietnam) second, Mexico City (Mexico) third and Delhi are in fourth place. At the same time, Lagos (Nigeria) is on the top in terms of working for the shortest time.

Working hours in a year? Mumbai = 3,314.7
Hanoi = 2,691.4 Mexico City = 2,622.1 New Delhi = 2,511.4 Bogota = 2,357.8 Dubai = 2323

Istanbul = 2,318.6

Seoul = 2307.2

Manila = 2,288.8

Paris = 1,662

Rome = 1,581

In case of earnings per hour:

In terms of hourly earnings, Geneva, Zurich and Luxembourg are at the top, while Mumbai is at the second place at the 76th place in the list. Below Mumbai is only Cairo.

African cities like Nairobi and Laos are better than Mumbai in average earnings. For this study, UBS looked at 15 professions. Zurich is the most expensive city in this study. Luxembourg was at the forefront of purchasing power.

Do The Long Work Hours Pay Off?

An employee in Mumbai would have to work for over 900 hours, while one in New Delhi would have to work at least 800 hours before being able to afford an iPhone X. Only employees in Cairo had to work longer (1,000 hours) to afford the latest Apple product.

RBI LAUNCHES 'FINANCIAL LITERACY WEEK'

Why in News: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched 'Financial Literacy Week' across the nation from June 4 to June 8, 2018.

Theme: The theme of the literacy week this year is 'Customer Protection'.

Important Points:

The main aim behind the initiative is to create

financial awareness among bank customers about financial products and services, good financial

practices and digitisation.

The week will focus on four consumer protection

messages like 'know your liability' for unauthorised electronic banking transaction and good practices for a safe digital banking experience.

Among various messages, the customers will be told through banners and posters that in case of unauthorised digital transaction if the bank is informed within 3 days, the liability of the account holder is zero.

Further, the resolution of the complaint is to be done by the bank concerned within a period not exceeding 90 days from the date of receipt of the complaint.

To accelerate the level of outreach of the initiative, RBI has devised a pilot project for financial literacy in 80 blocks of 9 states, in which 6 NGOs have registered themselves in Depositor education and awareness fund.

RBI has also signed a pact with 10 banks to provide financial education. The target groups of this initiative will be farmers, industrialists, school students, senior citizens and self- help groups.

Besides, banks have also been asked to create awareness about Banking Ombudsman scheme of the RBI.

The week will see participation from bankers, financial literacy counsellors (FLCs) and other stakeholders to create awareness regarding the same.

About RBI's Banking Ombudsman scheme:

The scheme is a mechanism created by the RBI to address the complaints raised by bank customers. It is run by the RBI directly to ensure customer protection in the banking industry.

According to RBI, the scheme enables an expeditious and inexpensive forum to bank customers for

resolution of complaints relating to certain services rendered by banks.

The Banking Ombudsman Scheme was introduced under Section 35 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 by RBI with effect from 1995. The present Ombudsman scheme was introduced in 2006.

The Banking Ombudsman is a senior official appointed by the Reserve Bank of India. He has the responsibility to redress customer complaints against deficiency in certain banking services. At present fifteen Ombudsmen were appointed by the RBI to settle complaints and they are appointed in state capitals.

All Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Scheduled Primary Co-operative Banks are covered under the scheme.

CO-OPERATIVE BANKS COULD BECOME SMALL FINANCE LENDERS

Why in News: The Reserve Bank will soon come out with a scheme for conversion of urban cooperative banks (UCBs) into small finance banks. The Urban Co-Operative Banks can now covert into SFBs after meeting the prescribed criteria. The details of the scheme will be announced separately by the RBI.

The decision was taken during the meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee.

Important Points:

The panel recommended converting UCBs with business size of Rs 20000 crore or more into regular banks in a bid to propel their growth.

It also recommended that licenses may be issued to "financially sound and well-managed co-operative credit societies" having a minimum track record of five years which suit the regulatory prescriptions set by the RBI.

The move is an outcome of the recommendations made by the High Powered Committee on Urban Cooperative Banks in August 2015. The committee was chaired by R Gandhi, the then Deputy Governor of the RBI.

The panel recommended voluntary conversion of large Multi-State UCBs into Joint Stock Companies and conversion of other UCBs into SFBs, which meet certain criteria.

Criteria to be met by Cooperative Banks to become Small Finance Banks

The Cooperative Banks need to get over few limitations to become financial banks. These are:

Limited resolution powers of RBI Capital structure of UCBs

Supervision at par with commercial banks
Conflicts of interest

Limited capacity to raise capital Lack of corporate governance

The small finance banks are also required to extend 75 percent of their Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) to the priority sector lending (PSL).

How transition into SFBs will be beneficial for UCBs?

UCBs had been facing financial trouble for several years, prompting the RBI to stop issuing fresh licences to the UCBs.

Though their performance has improved recently, their numbers have come down due to mergers and closures.

UCBs operate under a 'dual control' regime with supervision by both the RBI and the State Governments.

The non-availability of powers to the RBI to regulate and supervise UCBs at par with commercial banks restrains RBI from relaxing regulatory regimes, which in turn, is an obstacle for UCB's commercialisation.

By turning into SFBs, these co-operative banks will be regulated only by the RBI.

What is a Small Finance Bank?

They are niche banks that focus and serve the needs of a certain demographic segment of the population.

The objectives of setting up of small finance banks will be to further financial inclusion by (1) the provision of savings vehicles (2) supply of credit to small business units; small and marginal farmers; micro and small industries; and other unorganised sector entities, through high technology-low cost operations.

The small finance banks were created with an aim to

encourage financial inclusion by provision of savings vehicles and supply of credit to small business units.

Resident individuals/professionals carrying 10 years of experience in banking and finance and companies and societies owned and controlled by residents are eligible to set up small finance banks.

Existing Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs), Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), and Local Area Banks (LABs) that are owned and controlled by residents can also opt for conversion into SFBs.

At present, there are ten SFBs operating in India:
Au Financiers (India) Ltd., Jaipur

Capital Local Area Bank Ltd., Jalandhar
Disha Microfin Private Ltd., Ahmedabad
Equitas Holdings P Limited, Chennai
ESAF Microfinance and Investments Private Ltd., Chennai

Janalakshmi Financial Services Private Limited, Bengaluru

RGVN (North East) Microfinance Limited, Guwahati
Suryoday Micro Finance Private Ltd., Navi Mumbai
Ujjivan Financial Services Private Ltd., Bengaluru
Utkarsh Micro Finance Private Ltd., Varanasi

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What are Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs)?

The term Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs), though not formally defined, refers to primary cooperative banks located in urban and semi-urban areas. These banks, till 1996, were allowed to lend money only for non-agricultural purposes. This distinction does not hold today. These banks were traditionally centred around communities, localities work place groups. They essentially lent to small borrowers and businesses. Today, their scope of operations has widened considerably.

The Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) are registered as cooperative societies under the provisions of, either the State Cooperative Societies Act of the concerned State or the Multi State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.

They are regulated and supervised by the Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS) of State concerned or by the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS), as the case may be.

Banking Regulation Act, 1949 is partially applicable to co-operative banks. Thus RBI has partial control on co-operative banks.

(MOU) BETWEEN INDIA AND UNITED KINGDOM ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Why in News: The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was apprised of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and United Kingdom on technical cooperation in the field of Sustainable Urban Development in April, 2018.

Details

The objective of this MoU is to facilitate and strengthen India-UK institutional cooperation in the field of sustainable urban development. The areas of cooperation include smart cities development, solid waste management, green affordable housing, waste water management, capacity building of urban institutions, skill development in urban areas, urban mobility, intelligent transport system and transit-oriented development, innovative access to finance and other related areas as mutually agreed upon by the Contracting Parties.

Implementation strategy

Under this MoU, an Indo-UK Joint Working Group (JWG) will be set up to strategize and implement programmes on cooperation under the framework of the MoU. The Joint Working Group on Urban Development is expected to meet once in a year, alternately in UK and in India.

Major Impact

The MoU will promote strong, deep and long term bilateral cooperation in the field of Sustainable Urban Development between the two countries.

Beneficiaries

The MoU is expected to create employment in the areas of smart cities development, solid waste management, green affordable housing, waste water management, skill development in urban areas, urban mobility, intelligent transport system and transit-oriented development.

WORLD OCEANS DAY : 08 JUNE 2018

Why in News: Celebrated each year on 8 June since 2009, World Ocean Day is an opportunity to raise global awareness of the challenges faced by the international community in connection with the oceans.

Important Points:

The action focus for the 2018 World Oceans Day was 'preventing plastic pollution and encouraging solutions for a healthy ocean'. The agenda also coincided with the theme of 2018 World Environment Day - 'Beat Plastic Pollution'.

Plastic pollution is causing tremendous harm to the marine resources:

80 percent of all pollution in the ocean comes from people on land.

8 million tonnes of plastic ends up in the ocean every year, causing damage on wildlife, fisheries and tourism.

Plastic pollution costs the lives of 1 million seabirds and 100000 marine mammals per year. 'Fishes eat plastic, and we eat the fish'.

Why is World Oceans Day celebrated?

To mobilize and unite the world's population on a project for the sustainable management of the world's oceans.

They are a major source of food and medicines and a

critical part of the biosphere.

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To celebrate together the beauty, the wealth and the promise of the ocean. To remind everyone of the major role the oceans have in everyday life. They are the lungs of our planet, providing most of the oxygen we breathe.

To inform the public of the impact of human actions on the ocean.

To develop a worldwide movement of citizens for the ocean.

Background:

The United Nations General Assembly through its resolution 63/111 of December 5, 2008 designated 8 June as the World Oceans Day. The concept of a 'World Oceans Day' was first proposed in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro as a way to celebrate world's shared ocean and to raise awareness about the crucial role the ocean plays in our lives. The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea actively coordinates different activities of the World Oceans Day.

INDIA RECORDS 22 PER CENT REDUCTION IN MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO

Why in News: India has registered a significant decline in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) recording a 22-percent reduction in such deaths since 2013. According to the Sample Registration System (SRS) bulletin, the MMR has declined from 167 in 2011-2013 to 130 in 2014-2016. The MMR is defined as the proportion of maternal deaths per 1, 00,000 live births.

According to Health Ministry, every day 30 more pregnant women are now being saved in India as compared to 2013.

Important Points:

The decline in the ratio was most significant in Empowered Action Group (EAG) states from 246 to 188.

Among the southern states, the decline was from 93

to 77 and in other states from 115 to 93.

Kerala topped the list with 46 MMR, followed by Maharashtra with 61 and Tamil Nadu with 66.

The highest maternal death ratio was recorded by Assam at 237, though the number is down from 300 in 2011-13.

UP and Uttarakhand registered the second-highest MMR at 201, down from 285 in the last three years. Besides, three states including Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu were able to meet the SDG target for MMR of 70 per 1, 00,000. Two other states, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, are not very far behind.

According to SRS Bulletin, there were nearly 12,000 fewer maternal deaths in 2016 as compared to 2013, with the total number of maternal deaths reducing to 32,000 for the first time.

The figures mean that every day 30 more pregnant women are being saved in India as compared to 2013.

To understand the maternal mortality situation in the country better and to map the changes that have taken place, especially at the regional level, the government has categorised the states into three groups:

EAG states: The EAG states include Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Assam and Uttar Pradesh.

Southern states: The southern states include Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Other states: The category covers the remaining states and Union territories.

About Sample Registration System:

There are four major sources of vital statistics in India, namely; (a) the Sample Registration System (SRS),

(b) the Civil Registration System (CRS), (c) Indirect estimates from the decennial census and (d) Indirect estimates from the National Family Health Surveys (NFHS). The SRS is the most regular source of demographic statistics in India. It is based on a system of dual recording of births and deaths in fairly representative sample units spread all over the country. The SRS provides annual estimates of (a) population composition, (b) fertility, (c) mortality, and (d) medical attention at the time of birth or death which give some idea about access to medical care.

The First Report on maternal mortality in India (1997-2003) - Trends, Causes and Risk Factors was released in October, 2006.

The present Bulletin, which provides only the levels of maternal mortality for the period 2014-16, is being brought out as a sequel to the previous Bulletin (2011-13).

With this, the maternal mortality data from SRS is available for a period of 20 years.

Background

Reduction of mortality of women is an area of concern for the Governments across the globe.

The International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 had recommended reduction in maternal mortality by at least 50 percent of the 1990 levels by the year 2000 and further one half by the year 2015.

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The survey for the current bulletin covered 62,96,101 pregnant women, of whom 556 died.

What is MMR?

The Maternal mortality ratio is derived as the proportion of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. It represents the risk associated with each pregnancy.

Important Points:

A maternal death is the death of a woman during pregnancy or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy.

Maternal deaths can stem from any cause related or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management. However, it does not include deaths from accidental or incidental causes.

The MMR is a key performance indicator for efforts to improve the health and safety of mothers before, during and after childbirth per country worldwide.

GLOBAL PEACE INDEX 2018

Why in News: India has moved up four places to the 137th rank among 163 countries on the 2018 Global Peace Index, due to a reduction in the level of violent crime driven by increased law enforcement, according to a report by an Australian think tank. While, Iceland managed to retain its position as the most peaceful country in the world.

Important Points:

The report is known to cover 99.7% of the global population and uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators that are grouped into three primary domains, namely ongoing conflict, safety and security, and militarisation.

Besides Iceland, some of the other most peaceful country in the world include New Zealand (ranked

2nd), Austria (3rd), Portugal (4th), Denmark (5th), Canada (6th), Czech Republic (7th), Singapore (8th), Japan (9th) and Ireland (10th).

Syria remains the least peaceful country in the world,

a position it has held for the past five years.

Afghanistan, South Sudan, Iraq and Somalia round up the list of five least peaceful countries.

Four most peaceful regions are Europe, North America, Asia-Pacific, and South America; however, all these regions recorded deteriorations.

The countries that displayed the most significant growth in heavy weapons capabilities over the last 30 years are located in unstable regions facing high tensions with neighbouring countries. These include Egypt, India, Iran, Pakistan, South Korea and Syria.

Global level of peace has deteriorated by 0.27 percent in the last year.

The greatest increase in the number of deaths occurred in Syria, followed by Mexico, Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen.

A total of 71 countries have shown improvement in their rankings on the index, while, 92 countries have shown deterioration in their rankings on the index.

Amid continuing social and political turmoil, the world continues to spend resources on creating violence, but very little on peace.

About Global Peace Index (GPI)

GPI was launched in 2007 as a measure of world peace.

It is the world's leading measure of global peacefulness produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

The Index is composed of 23 indicators, ranging from a nation's level of military expenditure to its relations with neighbouring countries and the percentage of prison population in 163 countries.

The IEP is a Sydney-based international and independent think tank dedicated to shift the world's focus to peace as a positive, achievable, and tangible measure of human well-being and progress.

REVISION OF THE PENSION FOR MERITORIOUS SPORTS PERSONS

Why in News: Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Rajyavardhan Rathore has approved the upward revision of pension to meritorious sportspersons.

Under the revised rates, the rate of pension has been doubled off the existing rate of pension on winning medals in international sports events.

Important Points:

The medalists at the Olympic/Para-Olympic Games will now get Rs 20,000, double from earlier Rs 10000 per month.

The gold medalists at World Cup/World Championship in Olympic and Asian Games disciplines will get Rs 16,000, which is also double from earlier Rs 8,000 per month.

The silver or bronze medalists at World Cup or World Championship in Olympics and Asian Games disciplines and gold medalists in Asian Games/ Commonwealth Games/Para Asian Games will now get Rs14, 000 from earlier Rs 7,000 per month.

The silver and bronze medalist in Asian Games/ Commonwealth Games/Para Asian Games will get Rs 12,000.

The rate of pension of medal winners in the Para-Olympics Games and Para Asian Games will be at par with the medal winners in the Olympic Games and Asian Games respectively.

The World Championships held once in four years will only be considered for the pension.

In the case of existing pensioners, the revision in the rate of pension will be effective from April 1, 2018.

Other Points:

The rate of pension of medal winners in the Para-Olympics Games and Para Asian Games will be at par with the medal winners in the Olympic Games and Asian Games respectively.

World Championships held once in four years will only be considered for pension.

It is highlighted in the revised scheme that the sportsperson should retire from active sports career and attaining the age of 30 years at the time of applying pension under the scheme. An undertaking to this effect will be given by the sportsperson in the application form itself and the same has also been confirmed from SAI while forwarding application for verification of achievements of the applicant.

In the case of existing pensioners, the revision in rate of pension will be effective from 1st April 2018.

BUSINESS FIRST PORTAL FOR REGULATORY CLEARANCES AND FISCAL APPROVALS

Why in News: The Punjab Government launched a 'Business First Portal' to give a big push towards the ease of doing business in the state. The portal was unveiled by the state's Industry Minister Sunder Sham Arora in Jalandhar, Punjab.

While addressing the industrialists present at the launch, the Minister stated that online portal would facilitate the industrialists for regulatory clearances and fiscal approvals and real-time tracking of applications on a common platform.

Important Points:

The aim of launching the portal is to bring Transparency to the industry. Five users will be able to work in the first phase in the business first portal. New investors can get relief from this. The problems encountered in process work will be reduced and the paths of corruption will be reduced. The portal is fully dedicated to the industry and is designed to work as a single window.

Describing the industry as the backbone of the state's economy, the Industry Minister said that every problem of the industrialists would be solved on top priority and the jobs under Ghar Ghar Naukri flagship program of state government could be accomplished only if the industry was developed.

Further, the Punjab government has identified 22 industrial clusters for development of Common Facility Centers.

Ten MOUs were also signed on the occasion with an investment of over Rs 46.50 crores.

Business first portal:

Describing the new portal as a boon for industrialists, the Industry Minister said that this portal will also give regulatory approvals to other departments.

In the portal, the applicant will be given self-assessment facility so that the trader will be able to examine the given application and attached documents for the first time.

The State Government is committed to ensuring hundred percent VAT refund to the industrialists by the end of this year.

Through the portal, the state government has decided to release 300 crore rupees every two months to settle the cases of VAT refund. In addition, orders for disposal of all matters of VAT refund by December 2018 have also been issued.

WORLD BEST UNIVERSITIES RANKING

Why in News: Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT-B), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, and Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT-D) are in the top 200 in QS World University Rankings 2019 released on Wednesday. The number of Indian universities in the top 1,000 increased from 20 to 24.

Important Points:

The 15th edition of the QS World University Rankings has been released by global higher education analysts QS Quacquarelli Symonds. QS ranks the world's top 1,000 universities, across 85 countries.

Being the only international ranking to have received International Ranking Expert Group (IREG) approval, the QS ranking is viewed as one of the three most-widely read university rankings in the world, along with Academic Ranking of World Universities and Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

Globally, Massachusetts Institute of Technology remains the top university for the seventh consecutive year.

Stanford University, Harvard University and California Institute of Technology (Caltech) all retain their positions at second, third and fourth in the world respectively.

From Asia, National University of Singapore (11) Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (12) and Tsinghua University, China (17) have been ranked the best.

IIT-Bombay is now the top institute in the country rising 17 positions from 2018 to 162. Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore, rises 20 places to 170th.

17 of India's 24 ranked universities improved their rank for Academic Reputation, while 13 improved their rank for Employer Reputation.

Way ahead for India:

The rankings are an affirmation of faith in the premier Indian higher educational institutions. The

Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry has been taking several steps to improve the global rankings, especially the world-renowned IITs by

providing more funds and launching the Institutes

of Eminence scheme under which institutes would

be freed from regulatory framework. However, there's still work to be done beyond the top universities.

44TH G7 SUMMIT WAS HELD IN CANADA

Why in News: The 44th G7 Summit was held in Quebec, Canada on June 8-9, 2018. This was the sixth time since 1981 when Canada hosted the meeting. The 44th G7 summit was the first summit for Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hosted the summit. The 45th G7 Summit or the next G7 Summit will be held in France 2019.

What is G7 Summit?

G7 Summit is an event conducted annually where world leaders from seven powerful economies of the world, US, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Japan and Italy come together to discuss burning issues happening around the globe. They, by mutual understanding, also form policies or figure out remedies for the concerned issue.

What is the 44th G7 Summit all about?

Every year few international issues which need to be tackled are taken into account and policies are formed around them. Canada has put forward the following 5 themes for this year's summit:

Investing in growth that works for everyone. Preparing for jobs of the future.

Working together on climate change, oceans and clean energy.

Building a more peaceful and secure world.

Advancing gender equality and impacting women's empowerment.

Role of Gender Equality Advisory Council this year

For the first time in the last 44 years, the G7 will have a Gender Equality Advisory Council. The theme of women's empowerment is expected to dominate discussions. The aim of the council is to convince private sector companies to set up such council and eradicate the problem of gender inequality from the root.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S DECISION, WITHOUT THE UPSC CAN BE MADE BUREAUCRAT

Why in News: In a historic first, the central government has opened doors of bureaucracy to skilled workers from private sectors. According to the notification issued by the Central Government, it will not be necessary to pass the UPSC Civil Service Examination to become a larger officer.

Important Points:

The government in an official release announced the lateral recruitment to senior positions in the Government of India. In its release, the Department of Personnel and Training said that the Government is looking for ten outstanding individuals with expertise of more than 15 years in fields like Revenue, Finance, Transport, Civil Aviation and Commerce.

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In order to appoint these posts, the notification for the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) was extended in detail with the guidelines. The Government will now make necessary changes in the service rules for this.

As per the notification issued by DOPT, appointment will be made in the posts of Joint Secretaries in the Ministries.

Their tenure will be 3 years and if the performance is good then they can be appointed for five years.

The maximum age limit for the application on these posts has not been fixed, while the minimum age is 40 years.

The salary will be same as the Joint Secretary under the Central Government and all the same will be available in the same manner.

They will have to work like service rules and other facilities will also meet the same.

There will be only interviews for selection in this post and the committee formed under the leadership of the Cabinet Secretariat will interview them.

As per initial initiative, the government will now appoint Expert Joint Secretary in 10 Ministries. These 10 ministries and departments are - Finance Service, Economic Affairs, Agriculture, Road Transport, Shipping, Environment, Renewable Energy, Civil Aviation and Commerce.

What is the eligibility determined?

The position of Joint Secretary posted in a ministry or department is very important and is an important factor in finalizing and implementing major policies. According to merit, those who have 15 years of work experience in a private company other than the general graduate and any government, public sector unit, university, can also apply for these posts. The eligibility in the application has been fixed in such a way that for those 15 years of executive experience, the government can get direct admission for higher bureaucratic posts. The last date for applying has been fixed July 30.

11TH WORLD HINDI CONFERENCE

Why in News: Mauritius is going to host 11th World Hindi Conference in its capital city Port Lois from August 18-20, 2018. It will be organised by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India in association with Government of Mauritius.

The main theme of the Conference is 'Hindi Vishwa Aur Bharatiy Sanskriti'.

The venue of the Conference is Swami Vivekanand International Convention Centre, Pailles Mauritius.

About 11th World Hindi Conference:

The Ministry of External Affairs also aims to promote Hindi at the United Nations and in this regard, a lot of work is being done and the disclosures would be made at the World Hindi Conference.

As part of the preparation, regular official visits to Port Louis have been taking place in the past few months including one by Secretary in charge of Eastern affairs in the Ministry.

The World Hindi Secretariat (WHS) will be the organising authority of the event.

The conference will cover both classical and modern elements of Hindi and will see participation of delegates and scholars of Hindi from all over the world.

This World Hindi Conference seeks to produce concrete guidelines for the promotion of Hindi as a language of globalisation.

The special focus of this year's event will be on Bollywood and the global reach of Hindi through movies.

About World Hindi Conference:

The World Hindi Conference is major event organised every three years by MEA to increase the popularity of Hindi globally. The first conference was held from 10 to 12 January 1975 in Nagpur, Maharashtra and was inaugurated by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Since then, ten such Conferences have been held in different parts of world. In the first conference, then Prime Minister of Mauritius Seewoosagur Ramgoolam was Chief Guest and it was attended by 122 delegates from 30 countries. In remembrance of the first conference, every year 10th January is being observed as World Hindi Day. The 10 edition of World Hindi Conference was held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh (India) in 2015 with the theme of "Hindi Jagat-Vistar and Sambhavnaye".

promote a culture of prevention on Occupational Safety Health (OSH).

Details of the previous 10 Conferences held so far:

S. N.	World Hindi Conference	Location	Date
1.	First	Nagpur, India	10-12 Jan. 1975
2.	Second	Port Louis, Mauritius	28-30 Aug. 1976
3.	Third	New Delhi, India	28-30 Oct. 1983
4.	Fourth	Port Louis, Mauritius	02-04 Dec. 1993
5.	Fifth	Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago	04-08 Apr. 1996
6.	Sixth	London, U.K.	14-18 Sept. 1999
7.	Seventh	Paramaribo, Suriname	6-9 June, 2003
8.	Eighth	New York, USA	13-15 July, 2007
9.	Ninth	Johannesburg, South Africa	22-24 Sept. 2012
10.	Tenth	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh	10-12 Sept. 2015

WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Why in News: According to International Labour Organisation (ILO), child labour is defined as, "Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development." Marking the day, every year on June 12, the World Day against Child Labour is observed worldwide. The day reminds the government and workers organisations of resolve to eliminate the child labour.

The theme or campaign for World Day against Child Labour 2018 is 'Generation Safe & Healthy'.

Important Points:

The World Day against Child Labour was observed across the world on June 12, 2018 with an aim to raise awareness against child labour.

The joint campaign aims to boost initiatives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 8.8 of safe and secure working environments for all workers by 2030 and SDG target 8.7 of ending all forms of child labour by 2025.

Once these goals are achieved, these will benefit the next generation of the global workforce and will

There are 541 million young workers (15-24 years old) globally. They account for more than 15 percent of the world's labour force and suffer up to a 40 percent higher rate of non-fatal occupational injuries.

Over 73 million children are in hazardous work and almost half of the 152 million children aged 5 to 17 are still into child labour.

These children are toiling in mines and fields, factories and homes, exposed to pesticides and other toxic substances, carrying heavy loads or working long hours.

Many suffer lifelong physical and psychological consequences.

As per the ILO's Conventions, namely, the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No 182), no child under the age of 18 should perform hazardous work.

Child and Adolescent Labour:

The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986, amended in 2016, defines a person below the age of 14 years as 'child' and prohibits employment of a child in any kind of employment (such as domestic help). It is a cognizable criminal offence. People who employ children must be informed about The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Act of 2015 which could land them in prison.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) proclaimed the World Day against Child Labour in 2002 to focus attention on the global extent of child labour and the action and efforts needed to eliminate it.

Each year on 12 June, the Day brings together governments, employers and workers organizations, and civil society to highlight the plight of child labourers and what can be done to help them.

INDIA'S FIRST NATIONAL POLICE MUSEUM

Why in News: India will soon have its first national police museum as the central government has decided to establish the unique facility in Lutyens' Delhi. The unique museum, depicting the history, artefacts, uniforms and gear of central and state police forces, will come up as an underground facility in the premises of the national police memorial in Chanakyapuri area of the national capital.

Important Points:

The museum is expected to be inaugurated on October 21, on the occasion of Police Commemoration Day.

While some state police forces and paramilitary forces have their small museums, this is the first time that the country will have a national-level permanent exhibition on policing subjects.

It will also act as a repository of knowledge for researchers on policing subjects.

The central armed police forces (CAPFs), the central police organisations and the state police forces have been asked to collect their historical documents, items, police-related gazette notifications and unique weapons and uniforms so that it can be displayed at the museum.

The items sought to be put in the first-ever national police museum will include brass insignia, ceremonial and operational head gears and uniforms, batons, belts, distinctive photographs of dog squads, mounted columns and old copies of the Indian Police Act.

Some other items include women in policing, creation of maiden 'mahila' battalions, news clippings of historical significance, the very old and basic police communication and wireless equipment, flying squads and police medals and decorations.

A special gallery on policemen killed in the line of duty and decorated with gallantry medals will also be created.

A dedicated police staff will be deployed at the museum to undertake audio-visual tours.

"RAIL MADAD" APP

Why in News: Indian Railways has for the first time completely digitized the Complaint management system. Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways & Coal launched a new App "Rail Madad" - An App to expedite & streamline passenger grievance redressal.

About 'Rail Madad' App:

RPGRAMS (Railway Passenger Grievance Redressal and Management System), which has been developed by Northern Railway (Delhi Division) and comprises many novel features including 'Rail Madad' - a mobile App to register complaints by passengers through mobile phone/web.

It relays real time feedback to passengers on the status of redressal of their complaints- the passenger gets an instant ID through SMS on registration of complaint followed by a

customized SMS

communicating the action taken thereon by Railway. RPGRAMS integrates all the passenger complaints received from multiple modes (14 offline/online modes currently) on a single platform, analyzes them holistically and generates various types of management reports which enable the top management to continuously monitor the pace of grievance redressal as well as evaluate the performance of field units/ trains/ stations on various parameters viz cleanliness, catering, amenities etc. It also identifies weak/deficient areas and laggard trains/stations for undertaking focussed corrective actions.

Salient features of Rail Madad application are-

Rail MADAD (Mobile Application for Desired Assistance During travel) registers a complaint with minimum inputs from passenger (option of photo also available), issues unique ID instantly and relays the complaint online to relevant field officials for immediate action. The action taken on complaint is also relayed to passenger through SMS, thus fast tracking the entire process of redressal of complaints through digitisation.

Rail MADAD also displays various helpline numbers (e.g., Security, Child helpline etc) and provides direct calling facility for immediate assistance in one easy step.

All modes of filing complaints including offline and online modes are being integrated on a single platform, therefore the resultant management reports present a holistic picture of weak/deficient areas and enable focused corrective action by officials concerned.

The data analysis would also generate trends on various performance parameters of a selected train/ station like cleanliness, amenities etc thus making managerial decision more precise and effective.

Hierarchy based dashboard/reports will be available for management at Division /Zonal/Railway board level and sent through auto email to every concerned officer weekly.

TRUMP-KIM SUMMIT

Why in News: In a historic first, delegation level talks between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un began in Singapore. The world's two of the most powerful leaders held a brief one-on-one meeting at the Capella Hotel in Sentosa Island before beginning with their delegation level talks.

Important Points:

The bilateral summit is aimed at normalising ties and resolve seven decades of hostilities between the world's largest nuclear power and the largely isolated, North Korean state.

The summit aims to kickstart a process that would lead to complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

This is the first time that a sitting US president has met a North Korean leader in the last 60 years.

The meet follows decades of hostility, which worsened recently following North Korea's nuclear missile tests that brought America within striking range.

The exchange of threats between the two leaders had led the world to fear the possibility of a nuclear war.

The US and North Korean leaders signed an agreement after historic talks.

North Korea too had threatened to pull out of the Singapore summit following the US-South Korean military exercises.

The combatants of the 1950-53 Korean War are technically still at war, as the conflict, in which millions of people died, was concluded only with a truce.

They **succeed** in making a diplomatic breakthrough,

it could bring lasting change to the security landscape of Northeast Asia, like the visit of former U.S. President Richard Nixon to China in 1972 led to the transformation of China.

China's reaction to the historic Trump-Kim Summit:

China has praised the summit as historic and called for "full denuclearisation" to resolve tensions on the Korean peninsula.

Speaking on the development, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the fact that the two leaders "can sit together and have equal talks has important and positive meaning and is creating a new history."

CARPET AREA OF HOUSES ELIGIBLE FOR INTEREST SUBSIDY UNDER PMAY-U

Why in News: The Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has approved a 33-per cent increase in the carpet area of houses eligible for interest subsidy under the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) for the Middle-Income Group (MIG) under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) (PMAY-U) to boost affordable housing.

Objective

The decision to increase the carpet area for MIG section was done after inputs from various stakeholders.

The Credit Linked Subsidy scheme mainly aims to support the dream of every family in owning a house.

Hence, one of the key issues was the denial of the scheme's benefit to potential beneficiaries, just because they were buying flats or houses or constructing houses, where the carpet area exceeded the cap of either 120 sqm or 150 sqm, thus rendering them ineligible for the interest subsidy under MIG segment.

Important Points:

The carpet area of a house for Middle Income Group-I (MIG-I) has been increased from 120 sqm to 160 sqm and for MIG II, the area has been increased from 150 sqm to 200 sqm.

The new rules will be effective from January 1, 2017, the date on which the scheme became operational.

The decision is a big step to boost the construction sector that contributes to increased activity on the supply side.

The initiative is expected to result in enhanced economic activity that would contribute to improvement in the demand side.

These enhancements will enable more MIG customers to qualify for the subsidy and avail the benefits provided under the ambitious flagship mission of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).

Further, besides increasing the number of beneficiaries, the revision in carpet area will improve the construction activity and assist in moving the housing sector forward.

Besides, the decision also bodes well with the policy of the Reserve Bank of India to revise the housing loan limits for Priority Sector lending (PSL) eligibility.

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Under RBI's policy, it was decided that the housing loan limits for PSL eligibility will be revised from the existing Rs. 28 lakh to Rs. 35 lakh in metropolitan centres and from existing Rs. 20 lakh to Rs. 25 lakh in other centres, provided the overall cost of the dwelling unit in the metropolitan centre and at other centres does not exceed ₹45 lakh and ₹30 lakh, respectively.

Significance

The increased construction activity in the housing sector has a cascading effect on core sectors like cement, steel, machinery and other allied sectors.

Hence, more construction activity in the urban areas would result in the creation of more jobs for both skilled and unskilled workers.

Overall, the move will be a big boost to the economy.

Background

The scope of Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme was expanded to MIG category with the approval of the Union Cabinet on February 1, 2017.

The scheme, which was approved initially for implementation for the year 2017, was extended up to March 31, 2019.

Under the scheme, each beneficiary can avail subsidy up to Rs 2.35 lakh on purchase of a house under the scheme.

Under MIG-I, 4 per cent interest subsidy is available on loan up to Rs 9 lakh for people with an annual income **between** Rs 6-12 lakh, while 3 per cent interest

subsidy is given on loan up to Rs 12 lakh to people with income between Rs 12-18 lakh per annum.

As on June 11, 2018, an amount worth Rs 736.79 crore has been disbursed to 35,204 beneficiaries belonging to the MIG category.

About MIG Segment:

The MIG segment comprises an aspirational class of citizens, which is upwardly mobile.

The role of the hardworking citizens belonging to the MIG segment, who play a significant role in the economy of the country, has been acknowledged by the government time and again.

SEBI CONSTITUTES GROUP TO FACILITATE THE STOCK MARKET LISTING OF STARTUPS

Why in News: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has set up a group of industry experts to examine the possibility of letting local companies directly list their shares overseas, the capital markets regulator.

The group will also examine various legal, operational and regulatory constraints in facilitating companies incorporated in India to directly list their shares abroad and vice versa.

The nine-member panel will be headed by Ranu Vohra, co-founder and managing director at financial services firm Aventus Capital Pvt. Ltd. The group will submit the report to SEBI within a period of one month that is by July 2018.

Important Points:

To look into the existing Institutional Trading Platform (ITP) framework and suggest measures to facilitate listing of startups.

To revisit the current ITP framework and identify the areas, if any, which require further changes.

To address issues relevant to ITP which the group may like to assess.

Terms of Reference of the Group

The group will look into existing ITP framework and suggest measures to facilitate listing of startups. It will revisit current ITP framework and identify areas, if any, which require further changes. It will also address issues relevant to ITP which group may like to assess. The group will submit report to SEBI within period of one month i.e. by July 2018.

Institutional Trading Platform (ITP) framework

ITP framework is window on stock exchanges where e-commerce, data analytics, bio-technology and other startups can list and trade on their shares. It allows companies to list without necessarily doing an Initial Public Offer (IPO) of equity. SEBI had introduced it in 2013 to facilitate listing of new age companies, but it had failed to gain any traction.

Benefits of listing on ITP:

Facilitates capital raising by small and medium enterprises including start-up companies which are in their early stages of growth

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CLASSIC IAS ACADEMY

Provides easier entry and exit options for informed investors like angel investors

Provides wider investor base

Relaxed compliance and cost effective listing Tax benefits to long term Investors

About Securities And Exchange Board Of India (SEBI):

The SEBI was established in 1988 but was only given regulatory powers on April 12, 1992, through the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.

It plays a key role in ensuring the stability of the financial markets in India, by attracting foreign investors and protecting Indian investors. SEBI was built by the government of India. Its headquarters is located at the Bandra Kurla Complex Business District found in Mumbai. It also has northern, eastern, southern and western regional offices.

Background

SEBI had put in place the ITP framework in 2015 with a view to facilitate listing of new age companies in sectors like e-commerce, data analytics, bio-technology and other startups.

However, this framework failed to gain any traction.

CABINET NOD FOR

RS 24,000 CR FDI IN HDFC BANK

Why in News: The government approved the proposal of HDFC Bank to raise additional capital Rs 24,000 crore by selling equity to foreign investors to fund its business growth. This includes the premium, over and above the previous approved limit of Rs. 10,000 crore, such that the composite foreign shareholding in the Bank shall not exceed 74% of the enhanced paid-up equity share capital of the bank.

Important Points:

With this raising of this capital, FDI in the HDFC bank

would hit the regulatory ceiling of 74%.

It would also ensure that the composite foreign shareholding in the bank inclusive of all types of foreign investments, both direct and indirect, will not exceed 74% of the enhanced paid-up equity share capital of the bank.

The fund raising decision to allow the FDI in the bank which is the largest by any Indian company taken against the backdrop of strong growth in the bank's balance sheet over the last two years and an expectation that credit demand will revive as the economy stabilises.

If the entire amount is raised, it would tentatively boost the bank's capital adequacy ratio, which was 14.8% as on March end, by another 2.5-3%.

The proposed investment is expected to strengthen the capital adequacy ratio of the bank.

Background

HDFC, the second largest private bank had earlier sought approval for maintaining the permissible FDI or foreign holding in the bank up to 74% of its total paid-up capital, out of which the FII (foreign institutional investors) sub-limit would be 49 percent and the balance 25 percent would be FDI.

The decision will be subject to Foreign Direct Investment Policy conditionalities and other sectoral regulations / guidelines.

What is 'Foreign Direct Investment - FDI'

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment made by a firm or individual in one country into business interests located in another country. Generally, FDI takes place when an investor establishes foreign business operations or acquires foreign business assets, including establishing ownership or controlling interest in a foreign company. Foreign direct investments are distinguished from portfolio investments in which an investor merely purchases equities of foreign-based companies.

CABINET APPROVES PROPOSAL FOR ENACTMENT OF DAM SAFETY BILL, 2018

Why in News: The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for introduction of Dam Safety Bill, 2018 in the Parliament. The bill aims to help all States and Union Territories to adopt uniform dam safety procedures which will ensure safety of dams and safeguard benefits from such dams. This will also help in safeguarding human life, livestock and property.

Important Points:

The Bill provides for proper surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of all specified dams in the country to ensure their safe functioning.

The Bill provides for constitution of a National Committee on Dam Safety which shall evolve dam safety policies and recommend necessary regulations as may be required for the purpose.

The Bill provides for establishment of National Dam Safety Authority as a regulatory body which shall discharge functions to implement the policy, guidelines and standards for dam safety in the country.

The Bill provides for constitution of a State Committee on Dam Safety by State Government.

National Dam Safety Authority:

It shall maintain liaison with the State Dam Safety Organisations and the owners of dams for standardisation of dam safety related data and practices;

It shall provide the technical and managerial assistance to the States and State Dam Safety Organisations;

It shall maintain a national level data-base of all dams in the country and the records of major dam failures;

It shall examine the cause of any major dam failure;

It shall publish and update the standard guidelines and check-lists for the routine inspection and detailed investigations of dams and appurtenances; It shall accord recognition or accreditations to the organisations that can be entrusted with the works of investigation, design or construction of new dams;

It will also look into unresolved points of issue between the State Dam Safety Organisation of two states, or between the State Dam Safety Organisation of a State and the owner of a dam in that State, for proper solution;

Further, in certain cases, such as dams of one State falling under the territory of another State, the

National Authority shall also perform the role of State Dam Safety Organization thereby eliminating potential causes for inter-state conflicts.

State Committee on Dam Safety:

It will ensure proper surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of all specified dams in that State and ensure their safe functioning. It further provides that every State shall establish a "State Dam Safety Organisation", which will be manned by officers from the field dam safety preferably from the areas of dam-designs, hydro-mechanical engineering, hydrology, geo-technical investigation, instrumentation and dam-rehabilitation.

Background:

There are over 5200 large dams in India and about 450 are under construction. Plus there are thousands of medium and small dams. Due to lack of legal and institutional architecture for dam safety in India, dam safety is an issue of concern. Unsafe dams are a hazard and dam break may cause disasters, leading to huge loss of life and property.

The Dam Safety Bill, 2018 address all issues concerning dam safety including regular inspection of dams, Emergency Action Plan, comprehensive dam safety review, adequate repair and maintenance funds for dam safety, Instrumentation and Safety Manuals. It lays onus of dam safety on the dam owner and provides for penal provisions for commission and omission of certain acts.

CASHLESS TICKETING THROUGH 'UTSONMOBILE' APP DEVELOPED BY CRIS

Why in News: The Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) has developed a mobile-based application 'utsonmobile' to enable cashless ticketing.

The initiative is another step towards digitalisation and achieving a cashless economy.

Important Points:

The mobile app will enable booking and cancellation of unreserved tickets, issue and renewal of season and platform tickets and checking and loading of R-wallet balance.

It will also help maintain user profile management and booking history.

It will also be handy, free and available for both Android and Windows smartphone.

Users would be able to download the app from Google Play Store or Windows store free of cost.

Paperless Ticket: With the help of the app, passengers would be able to travel without a hardcopy of the ticket, as they could use the 'show ticket' option in the app to show their ticket to the checking staff.

First, the passenger will have to register on the app by providing the required details including name, mobile number, city, default booking train type, class, ticket type, number of passengers and frequently travelled routes.

Upon successful registration, Railway Wallet (R-Wallet) will be created automatically with zero balance to the passenger. There will be no extra cost for creating R-Wallet.

The R-Wallet can be recharged either at any of the UTS counter or through recharge option available on the utsonmobile website.

No advance ticket booking will be allowed on the app. The journey date will always have to be the current date.

Paperless Ticket:

The passenger can travel without taking hardcopy of the ticket. Whenever Ticket Checking Staff asks for ticket, the passenger will use 'Show Ticket' option in the app.

The smart phone should be GPS enabled to book paperless ticket.

The paperless tickets are not allowed for cancellation.

The journey should commence within one hour after booking paperless ticket.

The Season ticket can be issued/renewed from mobile application and it will be valid from the next day of booking the ticket. No need of GPS for issue/renewal of Season Ticket.

Platform Ticket can also be booked from mobile application.

In case passenger is not able to show the ticket on mobile then it is considered as ticketless travel.

Paper Ticket:

The passenger can book ticket through the mobile app. On **booking** of ticket, he/she will get Booking ID along with other ticket details. The booking details will also be available in booking history. The booking ID will also be conveyed through an SMS.

After booking Paper ticket, Passenger can go to the

journey originating (source) station to take ticket [print](#) out from any of the ATVM there, by entering his/her registered mobile number and booking ID. The Journey is valid only with printed ticket.

14 JUNE : WORLD BLOOD DONORS DAY

Why in News: World Blood Donor Day (WBDD) is celebrated each year on 14 June across the globe. The global event is aimed at raising awareness of the need for regular blood donations to ensure the quality, safety and availability of blood and blood products for patients in need. It is also a day to thank voluntary, unpaid blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood.

The theme of the World Blood Donors Day 2018 is 'Be there for someone else Give blood Share life'. The cancellation of Paper ticket is allowed either at the counter after printing the ticket or through the app before printing the ticket. However, in both the cases, cancellation fee is applicable.

The journey should commence within one hour after printing paper ticket in the kiosk.

Important Points:

Every 14 June since 2004, countries around the world celebrate this event on the birth anniversary of Karl Landsteiner - the Austrian-American pathologist and immunologist who distinguished the main blood groups.

126 countries have national guidelines on the appropriate clinical use of blood.

57 countries collect 100 percent of their blood supply from voluntary, unpaid blood donors.

Only 51 of 180 reporting countries produce Plasma-Derived Medicinal Products (PDMP) through the

fractionation of plasma collected in the reporting country.

Of the 112.5 million blood donations collected globally, around half of these are collected in high-income countries, constituting 19 percent of the world's population.

In low-income countries, up to 65 percent of blood transfusions are given to children under 5 years of age; whereas in high-income countries, the most frequently transfused patient group is over 65 years of age.

Based on samples of 1000 people, the blood donation rate is 32.1 donations in high-income countries, 14.9 donations in upper-middle-income countries, 7.8 donations in lower-middle-income countries and 4.6 donations in low-income countries.

Region-wide, around 18 million units of blood are required annually, however, around 15.9 million are collected at present, leaving a deficit of just over 2 million units.

Well-coordinated blood and blood product systems can have life-saving impact by ensuring that safe, high-quality blood products are available to all people at all times.

82 percent of the blood collected in the region is from voluntary, non-remunerated donors, which is a testament to the civic responsibility many people share, hence fulfilling this year's theme 'Be there for someone else. Give blood. Share life'.

Haemovigilance, a set of surveillance procedures covering the entire blood transfusion chain, can be managed and regulated in a better way.

Member States should ensure that Haemovigilance measures are reported to the WHO Global Database on Blood Donor Safety to ensure both public and private facilities do the same.

When was the day proclaimed?

The World Blood Donors Day was established in 2004 to raise awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products, and to thank donors for their voluntary, life-saving gifts of blood.

It is one of the eight official global public health campaigns marked by the World Health Organization (WHO) along with:

World Tuberculosis Day (24 March)
World Health Day (7 April)

World Immunization Week (last week of April)
World Malaria Day (25 April)

World No Tobacco Day (31 May) World Hepatitis Day (28 July)
World AIDS Day (1 December)

PM DEDICATED BHILAI STEEL PLANT TO THE NATION

Why in News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation the modernised and expanded Bhilai Steel Plant of state-owned Steel Authority of India (SAIL).

With this, SAIL has completed its around Rs 72,000 crore modernisation and expansion programme which will take its production capacity to 21 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) from the present 13 MTPA.

Important Points:

Bhilai Steel Plant, is today producing 130 metre long single piece rail track which is the longest in the world.

The annual production capacity of this factory is 31 lakh 53 thousand tonnes of salable steel.

This factory is also preparing special items like wire rod and merchant products.

Bhilai Steel Factory is registered with ISO 9001: 2000 quality management system. Therefore, all its sellable steel comes in the periphery of ISO.

This factory is the only manufacturer of rail tracks and heavy steel plates in the nation and the major producer of the structures.

It is the only supplier of the longest tracks of 260 meter rail in the country.

It is the only steel plant in the country which has got certificates in all these areas. The SAH: 8000 certification and the OHSAS-18001 certification for occupational health and safety is also given to the factory to take social responsibility.

ISO-14001 certification has been implemented in the entire factory and steel city and dolly mines. The factory has installed dust-resistant and electro-detective precipitators in the environment-friendly

coal dust injection system and other units in the blast furnaces.

Apart from this, the system of cleaning the atmosphere for gas reduction is also working. Work has also been started to remove the CTC, which reduces ozone in the steel factory. This work is being done in collaboration with United Nations Development Program. Water consumption during the year 2007-08 was 3.04 cubic meters per ton of raw steel, which is the lowest in the country.

Other announcements by Prime Minister Modi:-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also laid the foundation of passenger airliners from Raipur to Jagdalpur of the Central Government's 'Flying' scheme. With the launch of this aircraft service, the tribal-dominated Bastar division of the state joined the map of the country's air traffic. Certain symbols, certificates, checks and materials etc., as a symbol under the Prime Minister's Mantra Vandana Yojna, standup and monetary scheme, Prime Minister Ujjwala scheme, chief minister's pension lease scheme, Prime Minister Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojna and State Government's e-Rickshaw distribution scheme delivered.

MADE IN INDIA' LI-ION BATTERIES PLANNED TO END DEPENDENCE ON CHINESE IMPORTS

Why in News: In a move to achieve self-reliance in defence sector and to reduce the dependence on imports, especially from China, India is all set to produce its first lithium ion (Li-ion) battery on commercial basis. The Central Electro Chemical Research Institute (CECRI), Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu under Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and a private firm, RAASI Solar Power Private Limited have inked a pact for transfer of technology for India's first Lithium Ion (Li-ion) Battery project.

Important Points:

At present India depends on countries like China, Japan and South Korea for import of Lithium Ion batteries. India imported Li-ion batteries worth \$150 million in 2017 and is one of its largest importers in the world.

The indigenous production of Li-ion batteries is expected to boost Prime Minister Modi flagship programmes like generating 175 Giga Watts of clean energy by 2022 and National Electric Mobility Mission.

The RAASI Group will set up the manufacturing facility in Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu close to Bangalore. "We want to bring down the cost of cell manufacturing below Rs 15,000 per KW to replace Lead Acid Battery," said C Narasimhan, CMD of RAASI Group. "We also have plans to make Lithium Ion battery for solar roof top with life span of 25 years to make it affordable enough to drive the photo voltaic segment."

This is the first commercial ToT for manufacturing of the **Li-ion battery** in the country.

Currently, Indian **manufacturers** source Lithium Ion Battery from China, Japan and South Korea among

some other countries. India is one of the largest importers and in 2017, it imported nearly 150 Million US Dollar worth Li-ion batteries.

Li-ion battery

Lithium-ion battery is type of rechargeable battery that contains several cells. Each cell consists of cathode, anode and electrolyte, separator between electrodes and current collectors. In it, lithium ions move from negative electrode to positive electrode during discharge and back when charging. Li-ion battery use intercalated lithium compound as one electrode material.

Benefits of Li-Ion battery

It is light weighted and is one-third the weight of lead acid batteries. It is nearly 100% efficient in both charging and discharging as compared to lead battery which has 70% efficiency. It completely discharges i.e. 100% as compared to 80% for lead acid. It has life cycle of 5000 times or more compared to just 400-500 cycles in lead acid.

It also maintains constant voltage throughout entire discharge cycle whereas voltage in lead acid battery drops consistently throughout its discharge cycle. It is much cleaner technology and is safer for environment as it does not have environmental impact as lead acid battery. It can power any electrical application without the need of physical wires-means wireless.

TOURISM MINISTRY LAUNCHES NEW INCREDIBLE INDIA WEBSITE

Why in News: The Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism KJ Alphons launched the new 'Incredible India' website in New Delhi. The interactive website will showcase India as a holistic destination, revolving around major experiences such as spirituality, heritage, adventure, culture, yoga and wellness. It is designed using trends and technologies of international standards, in order to project India as a 'must-visit' destination, especially among its overseas travelers.

Important Points:

User-Friendly Design: The website is aesthetically designed to enable easy dissemination of a large amount of information.

Content Rich: The website comprises all the required content about destinations across the world, even about exotic destinations of the country.

Advanced Personalisation: The website leverages the power of Adobe Experience Cloud to identify different user personas and offer a personalised experience.

Interactive Search: The website has many useful features to make it more interactive and to provide a deeper engagement to the travelers visiting the website. It will also enable easy browsing of destinations and experiences of the user's choice with a quick search.

User-Generated Content: The website will also enable users to explore India through the experiences of fellow travelers and their stories.

Mobile Ready: Any information can be accessed easily on the website through mobile devices.

The website will be dynamic and constantly evolving, with a new design and theme, periodically.

It will soon be made available in Hindi and leading international languages.

The website was developed by Tech Mahindra and powered by NIC Cloud. The other stakeholders involved in its development include Google and Adobe.

The Tourism Ministry, with the help of Adobe solution suite, will be able to engage effectively with visitors across the web and social channels and measure engagement to deliver real-time personalised experiences for each visitor, based on their interest and travel personality.

Further, the Ministry in partnership with Google Arts & Culture will bring online a series of compelling visuals that will give the user an immersive experience of India's spectacular heritage, festivity, spirituality, museums and adventure.

MACEDONIA AGREES TO CHANGE ITS NAME TO RESOLVE DISPUTE WITH GREECE

Why in News: Greece and Macedonia defied protests and set aside three decades of dispute as they agreed on a new name for the Balkan state, potentially paving the way for Macedonia's admission to the European Union and NATO.

The foreign ministers of Greece and Macedonia signed an accord to rename the former Yugoslav republic the "Republic of North Macedonia," despite a storm of protest over a deal seen as a national sellout by some on both sides.

Important Points:

Greece and Macedonia, two countries of Europe, have taken this decision while resolving the ongoing 27-year dispute.

Macedonia will now be known as 'Republic of North Macedonia'.

In the Macedonian language, it will be called Severna Macedonia.

The agreement still requires the approval of both parliaments and a referendum in Macedonia. That approval is far from assured, as it faces stiff opposition from the Greek public, and Macedonia's president has vowed to block the deal.

Greece has been in dispute with Macedonia since 1991 over the former Yugoslav republic's name, arguing it could imply territorial claims over the Greek province of Macedonia and an appropriation of ancient Greek culture and civilization.

In 1991, separated from Yugoslavia, the new country was made of the Republic of Macedonia.

Located in the south, parts of Greece are also known as Macedonia. There was a dispute between the two countries on this.

The northern region of Greece is also Macedonia, and Sikander was also living in this area. That's why Greece's citizens were upset about this name.

The agreement reached by Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev has strong dissenters, with opponents staging large protests on both sides of the border. The issue threatened to split Greece's governing coalition, and provoked a rift between Zaev and his president.

INDIA TO HOST EUROPEAN UNION FILM FESTIVAL

Why in News: Putting a spotlight on the latest European cinema, the European Union Film Festival (EUFF) will premiere in New Delhi 18 June 2018 at the Siri Fort Auditorium. With a selection of 24 latest European films from 23 EU Member States, this year's film festival brings some unusual stories for the world cinema enthusiasts.

The European Union Film Festival is organized by Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India partnering with the Delegation of the European Union and embassies of EU Member States in various city film clubs.

Important Points:

The festival will be organised in 11 Indian cities: New Delhi, Chennai, Port Blair, Pune, Puducherry, Kolkata, Jaipur, Visakhapatnam, Thrissur, Hyderabad and Goa from 18th June till 31st August.

Celebrating diversity, the EUFF will screen movies from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

As a special attraction this year, audience, students and filmmakers will get an opportunity to interact with Katarina Krnáčová (Slovakian producer), Paula Ortiz (Spanish Director), Salvatore Allica (Italian Director), Yannis Korris (Greek Director), Douglas

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Boswell (Belgium Director) and Ádám Fekete (Hungarian Actor) who are travelling to India for the festival. Indian actress Neena Kulkarni who has worked in the Luxembourg movie being screened at the film festival will be attending the festival in Goa.

23rd European Film Festival has some unusual stories to tell: the lines of reality are blurred when the cyber world comes to life; a play done by a motley cast of antiheroes provides an opportunity for redemption; a man stuck in an unhappy marriage practices unusual ways to assert his freedom; a music critic finds his father irksome when they both begin to compete for the attention of an attractive psychotherapist; and three Kurdish siblings come together unexpectedly in a hair-raising journey during which they are pursued by angry relatives. These are just some of the curious themes of the European Union Film Festival of 2018.

Important Points about film festivals:

The EU Film Festival 2018 to be held from 18 - 24 June in Delhi, brings to the city a selection of some of the finest and most riveting films coming out of Europe.

The European Union Film Festival, organized by the Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, and European Union will be hosted at the Sirifort Auditorium Complex.

The Festival will be inaugurated by the Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Mr Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore.

Slovakian Producer Katarina Krnacova, whose film Little Harbour is the opening movie at the festival this year will also be attending the inauguration. Paula Ortiz (Spanish Director), Salvatore Allocá (Italian Director) will be present during their respective movie screenings.

About the European Union (EU):

The EU, which consists of 28 countries, has the world's largest economy and its third largest population, after China and India. Though richly diverse, the countries that make up the EU (its 'Member States') are all committed to the same basic values: peace, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. They have set up common institutions so that decisions on matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level. By creating a frontier-free single market and a single currency (the euro) which has been adopted by 19 Member States, the EU has given a significant boost to trade and employment. It is also at the forefront of policies on sustainability.

GOVERNMENT TO TEAM UP WITH GOOGLE FOR FLOOD FORECASTING

Why in News: Central Water Commission (CWC) has signed collaboration agreement with search engine giant Google for flood forecasting and dissemination of flood related information to masses. This initiative will help crisis management agencies to deal extreme hydrological events in better manner for effective flood management in India under National Hydrology Project (NHP).

Important Points:

Under this agreement, CWC will use state-of-the-art technological advances made by Google in field of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning and geo-spatial mapping for effective management of water resources particularly in the field of flood forecasting and dissemination of flood related information to masses widely using dissemination platforms developed by Google. Under this Agreement, CWC and Google will share technical expertise to collaborate on

Improving flood prediction systems, which will help provide location-targeted, actionable flood warnings,

High priority research project utilizing Google Earth to help visualize and improve flood management.

Cultural project to build online exhibitions on Rivers of India.

Under this collaborative arrangement, Google will use high resolution Digital Elevation Model (DEM) and vast computational resources and its technological expertise to generate flood inundation maps utilising level forecast input provided by CWC. This information will be disseminated with lead time of up to 3 days. The inundation forecasting will be done trial basis for flood season of 2018 and it will be scaled up in near future.

The collaborative arrangement will save of crore of rupees which would have been spent by government on acquiring high resolution DEM, high end computational resources and developing dissemination platforms widely used by masses.

This would enable Government as well as disaster management organisations to identify well in advance locations and population, which are at risk from floods and require warnings and information. This initiative is expected to be milestone in flood management and in mitigating the flood losses.

About Central Water Commission (CWC):

Central Water Commission is a premier Technical Organization of India in the field of Water Resources and is presently functioning as an attached office of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India. The Commission is entrusted with the general responsibilities of initiating, coordinating and furthering in consultation of the State Governments concerned, schemes for control, conservation and utilization of water resources throughout the country, for purpose of Flood Control, Irrigation, Navigation, Drinking Water Supply and Water Power Development. It also undertakes the investigations, construction and execution of any such schemes as required.

National Hydrology Project (NHP):

NHP was launched by Ministry of Water Resources in 2016-17. It is World Bank assisted central sector scheme with pan India coverage. Its objective is to improve extent, quality and accessibility of water resources information, decision support system for floods and basin level resource assessment and planning and to strengthen capacity of targeted water resources professionals and management institutions in India.

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA RELAXES NORMS FOR FPI INVESTMENT IN BONDS

Why in News: FPIs had lobbied with the RBI and finance ministry, as well as the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), that a huge lot of NCD issuance was stuck because of RBI rules. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) relaxed its April notification, which forbade FPIs from investing more than 20 per cent of their portfolios in bonds issued by a single corporate group.

Important Points:

In the April 27 notification, the central bank had said

an FPI, or its entities, could not have more than 50 per cent of investment in a single corporate bond and their portfolios could not take more than a 20 per cent exposure in any single corporate group.

There is also reduction of residual maturity, withdrawal of the auction mechanism, and revision of the cap on aggregate Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) investments in a sole security.

These measures will increase foreign funds into Indian debt and cool off borrowing costs when yields are on an upward direction, having pared profits made in April. The minimal residual security needed by FPIs for investing in Central Government Securities and State Developmental Loans was terminated by the Central Bank.

There is a condition that investment in securities having a residual maturity of less than a year has to be less than 20% of the total investment of the particular FPI in that category. FPIs were subject to invest in G-secs with a minimum residual maturity of three years till now.

FPIs had lobbied with the RBI and finance ministry, as well as the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), that a huge lot of NCD issuance was stuck because of RBI rules. The stuck deals were estimated at about Rs 50 billion, according to market sources.

While stressing that no FPI, or its affiliates, should invest more than 50 per cent in any corporate bond, the RBI said if an FPI had invested in more than 50

per cent of an issue, it should not invest more in it until this stipulation was met.

The latest RBI circular reaffirmed that an FPI's exposure to a single corporate should not exceed 20 per cent of the portfolio. However, "in case an FPI has, as on April 27, 2018, exposure in excess of 20% to any corporate, it shall not make further investments in that corporate until this requirement is met".

Besides, new investments in corporates made after April 27 would be exempt from this requirement till March 31, 2019, the central bank said. "To facilitate newly registered FPIs to build up a diversified portfolio, FPIs registering after April 27 are permitted to comply with this requirement by March 31, 2019, or six months from the date of registration, whichever is later,".

What is 'Foreign Portfolio Investment - FPI'?

Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) consists of securities and other financial assets passively held by foreign investors. It does not provide the investor with direct ownership of financial assets and is relatively liquid depending on the volatility of the market. Foreign Portfolio Investment differs from foreign Direct Investment (FDI), in which a domestic company runs a foreign firm, because although FDI allows a company to maintain better control over the firm held abroad, it may face more difficulty selling the firm at a premium price in the future.

NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY

OF INDIA TO THE NATION

Why in News: The Union Human Resource Development Minister, Shri Prakash Javadekar launched the new digital initiative of HRD Ministry 'National Digital Library of India' on the occasion of National Reading Day in New Delhi. This National Digital Library of India (NDLI) is a project of the Ministry of Human Resource Development under the aegis of National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT). The objective of NDL is to make digital educational resources available to all citizens of the country to empower, inspire and encourage learning. National Digital Library of India is developed by IIT Kharagpur.

About National Digital Library of India (NDLI):

It is single window platform that collects and collates metadata from premier learning institutions in India and abroad, as well as other relevant sources. It is open to all at free of cost.

It is digital repository 17 million-plus items containing textbooks, articles, videos, audio books, lectures, simulations, fiction and all other kinds of learning media) in 200-plus languages from more than 170 institutions.

It has been designed to hold content of any language and provides learning and research interface support for leading Indian languages. It is arranged to provide support for all academic levels including researchers and life-long learners from all disciplines and in all popular form of access devices and also to differently-abled learners.

The **vision** of the initiative is to build a national knowledge **asset** that facilitates high-quality education for learners everywhere with the help of technologically enhanced learning and support the digital India. NDLI is a digital library that makes quality learning **resources** available to all learners and has 1.7 Crore content from more than 160 sources, in over 200 languages, everywhere and 30 lakh users are registered on NDL as on date and our target is to increase the users 10 times in a year.

NDLI platform is collaborative in nature and extended his regards to contributing institutions which have made available their digital repositories for integration with NDLI.

In earlier times students had to struggle because of non-availability of books and other study materials, but now this initiative will make the educational resources easily accessible.

NDL aims to make a paradigm shift in education and research in India by enabling every citizen with the knowledge resources they need to empower themselves.

About National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT):

The National Mission on Education through ICT is a Centrally sponsored Scheme to leverage the potential of ICT, in providing high quality personalized and interactive knowledge modules over the internet/intranet for all the learners in Higher Education Institutions in any time any where mode. The initiative started during 11th Five Year Plan. The Mission has two major components viz.

UNITED STATES WITHDRAWS FROM UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Why in News: The United States has withdrawn from the United Nations' top human rights body accusing it of "chronic bias" against Israel, in a move that was criticised by human rights groups and described as regrettable by foreign leaders.

The decision to pull out of the UN Human Rights Council was announced by Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the UN.

Important Points:

The move came a day after the 47-member council began its latest session on June 18, 2018 with an attack against President Donald Trump's immigration policy.

This is just the latest rejection of multilateralism by the Trump administration, and will likely unsettle those who look to the United States to protect and promote human rights around the world.

The United States has always had a conflicting relationship with the UN Human Rights Council. The Bush Administration decided to boycott the council when it was created in 2006 for many of the same reasons cited by the Trump administration.

The then UN ambassador was John Bolton - who is currently President Trump's national security adviser and a strong critic of the UN.

Classic IAS ACADEMY

It wasn't until years later, in 2009, that the United States re-joined under the Obama administration.

About United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC):

The UN set up the council in 2006 to replace the UN Commission on Human Rights, which faced widespread criticism for letting countries with poor human rights records become members.

A group of 47 elected countries from different global regions serve for three-year terms on the council.

The membership of the council gives countries a voice in important debates over human rights atrocities.

The council meets three times a year to examine human rights violations worldwide.

The council was formed in 2006, but was shunned by the administration of US President George W Bush. In 2009, President Barack Obama reversed that decision and joined the council.

The US withdrawal from the council marks the first time that a member has voluntarily left the UNHRC. A sitting member of the Council has never dropped out in its 12-year history, though Libya was thrown out after a vote from the General Assembly in 2011.

The United States now joins Iran, North Korea and Eritrea as the only countries that refuse to participate in the council's meetings.

The council's current membership includes 14 countries that are ranked as "not free" by Freedom House: Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, China, Cuba, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.

INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY 2018

Why in News: The 4th International yoga day was celebrated across the world on June 21, 2018. The day's celebrations in India were led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Dehradun. The Prime Minister joined thousands of volunteers, performing Yoga asanas in the lawns of Forest Research Institute in Dehradun. Similar Yoga related events were held across the world to mark the occasion.

Theme: The theme for the 2018 celebrations of the International Day is 'Yoga for Peace'.

Objective: The International Day of Yoga aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practicing yoga.

Important Points:

The Prime Minister had earlier participated in the inaugural Yoga celebrations at Rajpath in New Delhi in 2015, the Capitol Complex in Chandigarh in 2016 and the Ramabai Ambedkar Sabha Sthal in Lucknow in 2017.

Eight events were organised in New Delhi along with the main event at Rajpath. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) organised events at Lodhi Garden, Nehru Park, Talkatora Garden and Rajpath.

Besides, around 50,000 yoga enthusiasts including women personnel from various Central Armed Police Forces such as BSF, CRPF, CISF participated in a yoga event at Red Fort organised by Brahma Kumaris. Separate yoga functions were also organised in Patanjali Yoga Samiti in Dwarka and Art of Living in Rohini.

Yoga guru Ramdev conducted a yoga session in Kota, Rajasthan at RC Ground. Many other yoga groups and leaders also conducted group yoga training sessions across India.

Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel performed yoga in cold desert of Ladakh at an altitude of 18,000 feet.

Eastern naval command staff also performed yoga

on board INS Jyothi in Bay of Bengal off

V isakhapatnam. Eastern Naval Command's submarine staff also participated in the day's observance.

World over, the day was celebrated in more than 150 countries, with Indian missions co-ordinating activities in landmark places.

While in China a yoga event was held at Longfu Temple, in Cambodia, the day's celebrations took place in front of the iconic Angkor Wat complex. The event was attended by more than 1100 yoga practitioners including students, youth, government functionaries, national and international tourists.

The draft resolution establishing the International Day of Yoga was proposed by India and endorsed by a record 175 member states.

Recognising its universal appeal, on December 11, 2014, the United Nations declared June 21 as International Day of Yoga in 2014.

About Yoga:

Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. The word 'yoga' derives from Sanskrit and it means to join or to unite, symbolising the union of body and consciousness. Today, yoga is practiced in various forms around the world and continues to grow in popularity.

Why was June 21 selected to mark the International Yoga Day?

June 21 is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and has special significance in many parts of the world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had proposed the date for Yoga day in his address during the opening of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly in 2014.

7-STAR GRAM PANCHAYAT

RAINBOW SCHEME

Why in News: Haryana government has decided to give star rankings to its panchayats on the basis of seven social parameters under the state's 7-Star Gram Panchayat Rainbow scheme. As many as 1,120 villages of the state have achieved the rankings under the scheme, launched in January this year. Ambala has topped star ranking followed by Gurugram and Karnal.

Important Points:

Under this scheme, seven social parameters under which panchayats will be judged are sex ratio, education, hygiene, environment preservation, governance and social participation. Stars of different colours (mentioned below) are awarded to

panchayats depending upon their performance in each parameter.

Gram panchayats scoring maximum in all

parameters will be recognized as Indradhanush Gram Panchayats. They will get special grants for development works from Development and Panchayats Department of the State Government

depending upon their performance.

Villages winning six stars will be entitled to get additional developmental works worth Rs 20 lakh. Villages with 5 stars rating will get additional developmental works worth Rs. 15 lakh. Villages with 4 stars will get additional developmental works worth Rs 10 lakh.

The villages would be rewarded Rs one lakh for achieving each star. "The villages having equal or more girl population would be given an additional Rs 50,000 as bonus with their reward money. Similarly the villages which adopted Swachhta Mission would be given additional Rs 50,000 as reward.

Various Colour Stars:

Pink star: It will be awarded to those panchayats that make outstanding performance in improving sex ratio.

Green star: It is for protection of environment, white star for cleanliness,

Saffron star: It is for crime-free villages.

Sky colour star: It will be awarded to village that will have no drop out.

Golden star: It is for good governance.

Silver star: It will be awarded for participation in development of villages.

SIPRI : ONLY TWO COUNTRIES HAVE 92% NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THE WORLD

Why in News: According to updated count by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the number of nuclear warheads with nine nuclear countries has reduced from 14,935 at start of 2017 to 14,465 at start of 2018. These nine countries are United States, Russia, Britain, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. SIPRI is an independent think tank that uses open sources to compile such data since 1966.

Important Points:

Out of 14,465 nuclear warheads at the beginning of 2018, 3750 are actually deployed. This compared with 14,935 warheads at the start of 2017. Russia (with 6850 nuclear warheads) and US (with 6450 warheads) hold 92% of world's total nuclear warheads. However, they have long-term programmes under way to replace and modernise their nuclear warheads and nuclear weapons production facilities.

World's nuclear powers are reducing their nuclear arsenals but they are also modernising, putting fresh and worrying focus on strategic deterrence. The reduction is due to arms control commitments by US and Russia in 2010 Treaty on Measures for Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty).

Britain has 215 nuclear warheads, France has 300, China has 280, India 130-140, Pakistan 140-150, Israel 80 and North Korea 10-20. These countries are either deploying or planning to deploy new nuclear weapons system. North Korea also demonstrated unexpected rapid progress in testing of two new types of long-range ballistic missile delivery systems for delivery of its nuclear weapons.

About Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI):

SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public. Based in Stockholm, SIPRI also has a presence in Beijing, and is regularly ranked among the most respected think tanks worldwide. Located in Stockholm, Sweden, SIPRI offers a unique platform for researchers from different countries to work in close cooperation.

UNDER INDIA SMART CITIES AWARD 2018

Why in News: Surat smart city has been selected for 'City Award' for showing great momentum in the implementation of projects under 'India Smart Cities Award' 2018.

Important Points:

Overall, nine awards have been announced under the India Smart Cities Awards. The awards are divided into three categories:

City Award: The city award will be conferred to Surat for showing great momentum in the implementation of projects especially in the categories of urban environment, transport and mobility and sustainable integrated development.

Innovative Idea Award: The Innovative idea award is conferred to a project or an idea that is particularly remarkable for its innovative, bottom-up and transformative approach towards the achievement of sustainable integrated development.

The joint winners in the category include Bhopal for its Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) and Ahmedabad for its Safe and Secure Ahmedabad (SASA) Project.

Project Award: The award is given to most innovative and successful projects in seven categories that have been completed by April 1, 2018.

The selected projects include:

S.no.	Category	Project Name
1	Governance	PMC Care from Pune
2	Built Environment	Smart Place Making from Pune
3	Social Aspects	Smart Class rooms from NDMC and Jabalpur, Smart Campus from Visakhapatnam, Lighthouse from Pune
4	Culture and Economy	B Nest Incubation Centre from Bhopal, Conservation of Rajasthan School of Arts from Jaipur
5	Urban Environment	Public Bike Sharing from Bhopal, Pune, Coimbatore and Waste to Energy Plant in Jabalpur
6	Transport and Mobility	Integrated Transit Management System (TMS) from Ahmedabad and Surat
7	Water and Sanitation	Smart Water Management through SCADA from Ahmedabad

About India Smart Cities Award

The awards were launched on June 25, 2017 with an aim to reward cities, projects and innovative ideas, promoting sustainable development in cities.

Only smart cities are eligible for the awards.

The results were declared after a technical committee comprising international/multilateral experts from UN Habitat, Asian Development Bank and NIUA evaluated the submissions based on innovation, impact, replicability and scalability.

The city award was decided on the basis of the cities' performance on their awards score and on weekly ranking score as on May 2, 2018, which was the award application submission deadline.

TRUMP ORDERS CREATION OF NEW MILITARY BRANCH: 'SPACE FORCE'

Why in News: US President Donald Trump ordered the US Defense Department and the Pentagon to create a "Space Force", an independent sixth branch of the armed forces.

The Space Force military branch would be "separate but equal" to the Air Force. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would oversee the creation of the force.

Important Points:

The announcement regarding the creation of the Space Force was made at a meeting of the National Space Council. Trump was joined by Vice President Mike Pence, who leads the recently revived space council as well as NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine.

During the meeting, President Trump also signed a new space policy directive aimed at reducing debris in Earth's orbit. The policy sets up new guidelines for satellite design and operation, as well as tracking the growing amount of clutter in space.

The idea of creation of the Space Force was floated by Trump months ago and was proposed in 2017 by US Representatives Mike D. Rogers and Jim Cooper.

The president also reasserted plans to land astronauts on the moon again and do another human lunar landing within 10 years; and eventually on Mars.

At that time, this military branch was proposed as a separate branch of service with its own four-star

general serving on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

However, the proposal was scrapped following resistance from senior Pentagon officials, including Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson and Air Force Chief of Staff General David Goldfein.

Some of the officials were worried that the Space Force would duplicate existing efforts as the Air Force already maintains a Space Command.

Under their plan, the branch would have reported to the Department of the Air Force.

Outer Space Treaty

In 1967, the United States had signed the Outer Space Treaty that bars states from testing weapons and establishing military bases on the moon and other celestial bodies. The treaty prohibits the placement of weapons of mass destruction in orbit around Earth. However, the treaty has no enforcement mechanism.

WORLD'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMANITARIAN FORENSICS

Why in News: The world's first International Centre for Humanitarian Forensics (ICHF) was launched in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The centre is joint venture of Regional delegation of International Committee of Red Cross (ICCR) in India, Bhutan, Nepal and Maldives and also Gujarat Forensic Science University.

The main aim of the Centre would be to provide service to the nation and to the entire world when the need arises.

Important Points:

ICHF is the first definitive effort at institutionalising humanitarian forensic action within an existing university system.

The Centre will conduct various academic and professional programmes, training, research and provide technical expertise to support operations (together with authorities and agencies concerned) in the field of humanitarian forensics.

It is envisioned to be the one-stop centre of excellence in Asia for global high quality and sustainable capacity building, research and innovative projects that will underpin operational responses for humanitarian forensic purposes in relevant contexts.

The joint venture has been established, as forensics plays an important role in humanitarian action but access to practitioners is a great challenge. The Centre of excellence would promote best practices in forensics.

The centre will aid humanitarian efforts during emergencies and natural disasters such as the work carried out by Red Cross during the Gujarat Earthquake.

It would not only assist in dignified and proper management of the dead bodies during disasters or emergencies but also in their identification.

The joint project represents what humanitarian work will look like in future. It will combine local



and international expertise to build capacities

before tragedies hit people.

Classic IAS ACADEMY

The Gujarat Forensic Sciences University will run different courses both post graduate and post graduate diploma courses in Humanitarian Forensics.

About Gujarat Forensic Sciences University (GFSU):

GFSU is the world's first and only University dedicated to Forensic and allied Sciences. It was established by the Gujarat Government through act passed by state legislative assembly in September, 2008. It is located Gandhinagar, capital city of Gujarat state. It became functional from July 2009 with various courses, scientific programs and training modules.

The university is recognized by University Grants Commission (UGC) as State University under section 22 of UGC Act, 1956. Its objective is to fulfil acute shortage against increasing demand of forensic experts in the country and around the world. It runs in parallel association with Directorate of Forensic Science (DFS) Gujarat to provide hands-on training pertaining to various areas of forensic science, forensic psychology and research and development.

Background

Natural and manmade calamities are taking place at regular intervals in the country and world over and a large number of people are becoming victims of such calamities. At such a time, the role of Humanitarian Forensics becomes essential and significant.

DJB'S 2-PART PLAN TO TIDE OVER CRISIS, GET 200 MGD MORE WATER BY 2021

Why in News: The national capital may soon get its own version of Singapore's NEWater, essentially sewage treated to make it **potable** and if all goes well, it could soon augment its existing water supply by a fifth. Considering the water crisis in the state and the dependence of other states on the basis of the Delhi government, the waste water management plan has been approved. Under this, the water board has started preparing to use the treated water.

In order to overcome the shortage of water under chairmanship of Delhi Jal Board Chairman and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was approved to start work on the scheme. Under this scheme, the water purified will be released in Yamuna, which will also give clean water to Yamuna and adequate water will be available to Chandraval and Wazirabad plants.

Important Points:

Currently, Delhi produces around 916 MGD (million gallons per day) of water, roughly 3.5 billion litres, out of which only around 80 MGD comes from groundwater. The rest, which comes from the Yamuna and the Ganga, is treated and supplied to consumers. The water utility now plans to increase its production capacity by around 200 MGD by the year 2021. The city needs around 1100 MGD.

Nearly 70 MGD of water from the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) of Cornish Park will be left in Haryana Yamuna in Yamuna.

A water treatment plant of 50 MGD will also be made in Sonia Vihar Phase-II. The capacity of this water treatment plant will be 140 MGD and the water from the Gang Canal will be treated here.

This extra water from Uttar Pradesh will help reduce the capital's dependency on Haryana with which it has been engaged in a legal tussle over water sharing.

All these projects may start work in the next three months.

The water left in Yamuna will flow towards the river

flowing along the river's flutter. This will clear the water naturally.

According to experts, if the water flows in the river for one kilometer then it increases a unit BOD. In such a situation, the water from Haryana border will reach Wazirabad after reaching about 40 kms, which will clear the water very much.

The water of this entire river will be cleaned again at Wazirabad and Chandraval Water Treatment Plant. This reduces water shortage in the two plants to a great extent.

PRIME MINISTER TO LAY FOUNDATION STONE OF VANIJYA BHAWAN

Why in News: Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of Vanijya Bhawan, a new office complex for the Commerce Department of the Government of India. Located near India Gate, it is being built on a plot of 4.33 acres, belonging to erstwhile Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals (DGS&D), at the junction of Akbar and Man Singh Roads.

Important Points:

Strictly conforming to Central Vista norms, the building has an area of 19233.745 sq. meters. It will accommodate about 1000 officers and staff.

Classic IAS ACADEMY

While retaining the Central Vista architecture, the Vanija Bhawan will have all modern technology driven features.

It will be a completely paperless office with state of the art facilities such as smart access control, central air-conditioning, video conferencing, and completely networked systems. The building is also significantly a green building with all required certifications.

The layout of the building has been planned so as to minimise the number of trees that would have to be cut. More than 56% of the 214 trees on the plot are either being left untouched or are being replanted on the same plot. About 70% of the big trees have been saved. 230 new trees are also being planted on the same plot, thereby ensuring that tree cover on the site would increase after construction of the new building.

The new building will be a symbol of not only India's growing economic might but also the adoption and use of technology in governance in India. The manner in which public procurement in India has been transformed by Government e-Marketplace (GeM), is an exemplary use of information technology by the Department of Commerce.

With the addition of new responsibilities like Integrated Logistics Sector Development to its already wide portfolio including the formulation, implementation, monitoring and review of the country's foreign trade policy, work relating to

multilateral and bilateral commercial relations, Special Economic Zones, state trading and export promotion and trade facilitation, the role of the Department of Commerce will become even more important for the economic growth of the country.

Background:

The Department of Commerce is currently housed in Udyog Bhawan which also houses a large number of other Government of India departments leading to constraint of space. A few of its attached and subordinate offices like the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) and Government e-Marketplace (GeM) are operating from rented premises.

AADHAAR BIOMETRIC DATA CAN'T BE USED FOR CRIMINAL PROBES: UIDAI

Why in News: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has notified that use of Aadhaar biometric data for criminal investigation is not allowed under Aadhaar Act, 2016. This comes after National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Director Ish Kumar made strong pitch for police to be provided with limited access to Aadhaar data to aide them in catching first-time offenders and for identification of unidentified bodies.

Important Points:

As per Section 29 of the Aadhaar Act, the biometrics data collected by UIDAI can be used only for purpose of generating Aadhaar and for authentication of identity of Aadhaar holders and cannot be used for any other purpose.

The very limited exception to this is allowed under Section 33 of Aadhaar Act, which permits use of or access to Aadhaar biometric data in cases involving national security only after pre-authorisation by oversight committee headed by Cabinet Secretary.

This is also consistent stand taken by Union Government in ongoing Aadhaar case in the Supreme Court. Based on this legal stance, UIDAI has never shared any biometric data with any crime investigating agency.

The Aadhaar Act describes biometric information as photograph, fingerprint, iris scan or such other biological attributes of an individual.

Over the last few months, UIDAI has been facing criticism on privacy grounds related to biometric data stored by it.

There are more than 1.21 billion Aadhaar number holders in the country.

Background:

The NCRB director had yesterday stated that around 50 lakh cases were registered every year in the country and most of them committed by first-time offenders, who leave their fingerprints, which would not be available in police records. There is need for access to Aadhaar data to police for the purpose of investigation. This is essential because 80 to 85 per cent of the criminals every year are first time offenders with no records (of them available) with the police. But, they also leave their fingerprints while committing crime, there is need for limited access to Aadhaar. So there is need for access to Aadhaar data to police for purpose of investigation.

About Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI):

Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) is a government agency in New Delhi that serves as the issuing authority for Aadhaar unique identification numbers (UIDs) and cards. The agency has been mandated by the government to develop, identify and set up the necessary infrastructure for issuing Aadhaar cards.

The UIDAI was established in 2009 and functions as part of the Planning Commission of India. The agency issues cards with the help of several registrar agencies composed of state-owned entities and departments as well as public sector banks and entities such as the Life Insurance Corporation of India. As of this writing, UIDAI has issued 20 crore Aadhaar UID numbers and cards across the country in the past two years. It expects to cover another 40 crore individuals by 2014.

INDIA, CUBA SIGN TWO MOUS

Why in News: India and Cuba signed two Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) in the field of biotechnology, traditional medicine and homeopathy. The agreements were signed following delegation-level talks between President Ram Nath Kovind and his Cuban counterpart Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel at Revolution Palace in Havana, Cuba. The President was accompanied by a delegation including Minister of state for steel Vishnu Deo Sai and two Members of parliament.

Important Points:

President Ram Nath Kovind is on a three-nation visit to Greece, Suriname and Cuba. Prior to Cuba, President Kovind visited Greece and Suriname and discussed issues of bilateral concerns with the concerned dignitaries of respective countries.

MoU on Traditional Systems of Medicine: It aims to

increase cooperation in traditional medicine and homeopathy between both countries.

MoU on Bio Technology: It aims to deepen collaboration on biotechnology between both countries. It was signed between BioCubaFarma, Cuba's state company for pharmaceutical and biotechnology products, and India's Kalam Institute of Health Technology.

The health ministries of Cuba and India signed an MOU to increase cooperation in traditional medicine and homeopathy.

Meanwhile, envoys from the Ministry of Science and Technology of both the sides agreed on an MOU to deepen collaboration on biotechnology. In this context, a Letter of Intent was signed between BioCubaFarma, Cuba's state company for pharmaceutical and biotechnology products, and India's Kalam Institute of Health Technology.

Cuba reaffirmed its support to India's candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

India-Cuba Relations:

India shares a strong, cordial and friendly relations with Cuba. Cuba and India have historic ties which date back to 1959 when famous guerrilla fighter Ernesto Guevara visited New Delhi.

Both the countries are founding members of Non-Aligned Movement and have stood for South-South solidarity. The two countries have also collaborated very closely in United Nations and other forums.

SURYASHAKTI KISAN YOJANA

Why in News: The Gujarat government launched a solar power scheme for farmers- Suryashakti Kisan Yojana (SKY) enabling them to generate electricity for their captive consumption as well as sell the surplus power to the grid and earn an extra buck. The announcement was made by the Chief Minister Vijay Rupani in Gandhinagar.

Important Points:

As per the scheme, farmers having existing electricity connection will be given solar panels as per their load requirements.

The State and Central governments will give 60% subsidy on the cost of the project. The farmer is required to take 5% cost, while 35% will be provided to him as an affordable loan with interest rates of 4.5-6%.

Chief minister Vijay Rupani announced Suryashakti Kisan Yojana or SKY as it's called as per which farmers, besides producing electricity for farm and irrigation purposes, can also sell surplus power to the state owned power companies at Rs7 per unit for a period of 7 years under this scheme.

The state government today launched a pilot project for the scheme which aims to cover 33 districts by setting up 137 feeders, covering 12,400 farmers.

The cost of the pilot project is estimated to be about Rs. 870 crore, according to a state government statement. To produce 1,42,000 horse power of energy for irrigation through water pumps will require 177 megawatts of solar power generation in the pilot stage.

SKY would be an able element in fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pledge to double the income of farmers by year-2022.

As per the new scheme, a farmer signing up for it will have to spend only 5 % amount of the total expenditure for installing the solar project (including solar panels and inverters).

Farmers in Gujarat get about 8 hours of power supply for irrigation purpose and with implementation of SKY they can avail this for up to 12 hours.

The central government has been aggressively promoting clean and renewable energy initiatives with an ambitious target to install 100 giga watts (GW) of energy capacity from solar power by 2022.

With over 300 sunny days and high solar radiation, coupled with low prices of solar panels, this new initiative by the Gujarat government offers a powerful clean energy solution to power irrigation pumps and connect them to the grid.

According to the government, a farmer would be able earn a bare minimum of at least Rs 11,500 per year and could also make much more.

UAE ANNOUNCED FREE TRANSIT VISA TO INDIANS IN DUBAI AND ABU DHABI

Why in News: In a recent United Arab Emirates (UAE) Cabinet meeting, a decision has been approved to exempt transit passengers from all entry fees for the first 48 hours. This means that Indians traveling to different places of the world while being Dubai and Abu Dhabi will not have to spend a single penny to stay in Dubai and Abu Dhabi for 48 hours.

Important Points:

In addition, the UAE cabinet has also decided to provide the Legislative package for the Foreign Workers' Insurance and Visa facility in the private sector.

This decision was taken in a Cabinet meeting chaired by the ruler of Dubai and UAE's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.

This period can be extended to 96 hours or 4 days only by giving 50 dirhams (1000 rupees). The date of implementation of the new rule is yet to be announced.

Passenger transit visas can be obtained from all the express counters in the passport control hall made at the UAE airport.

The UAE is already one of the most popular international destinations for the travellers in India. About 25 percent people from India fly to and from Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and other cities via some UAE-based airlines such as Emirates, Jet-Etihad and flyDubai.

Other decisions:

Travelers travel by the Indian passengers most of the Gulf countries. The UAE cabinet has also decided to give a new 6 month visa to those seeking employment. In 2017, 3.60 lakh Indian tourists visited Abu Dhabi. This number is 11 percent more than the previous year.

UAE is offering Visa on Arrival facility to Indian nationals with valid US visa. Similarly, Oman is also providing this facility to Indian travelers with visas from US, Canada, Australia, UK and Japan.

In 2017, Qatar has permitted Indian nationals and residents of other 46 nations to stay in the country for a maximum of 60 days without applying for a visa beforehand.

Transit visa:

Transit visas are given for hours to go to another country according to the hours. This visa is for 72 hours only. You have to take a return ticket to fill such a visa application.

SAUDI ARABIA LIFTS BAN

ON WOMEN DRIVERS

Why in News: Women in Saudi Arabia are finally able to drive legally after a long-standing ban was lifted by a royal decree. In a first, women across Saudi Arabia were legally allowed to drive for the first time since 1957 on June 24, 2018, thus, ending the world's last ban on female drivers which was seen as a symbol of women's repression in the deeply conservative Muslim kingdom. The unexpected decision to finally allow women to drive has been welcomed and praised by human rights campaigners across the world since it was first announced in September last year.

Classic IAS ACADEMY

The 32-year-old prince pledged a 'moderate and open' Saudi Arabia in October 2017, breaking with ultra-conservative clerics in favour of an image catering to foreign investors and Saudi youth.

Important Points:

The decree ordered the formation of a ministerial body to give advice within 30 days and then implement the order by June 24, 2018.

The royal decree ended a conservative tradition seen by rights activists as an emblem of the Islamic kingdom's repression of women.

The lifting of ban, women in Saudi Arabia fired up their engines and hit the roads, marking the moment they had waited for since the issuance of the royal decree by King Salman on September 26, 2017 to lift the driving ban on women.

Following the royal decree, driving schools for women were set up in the kingdom. Female driving instructors who obtained licences abroad were offered with the teaching positions.

As estimated, over 3 million women are expected to drive in the country by 2020.

Saudi King Salman on September 16, 2017 issued a royal decree that allows women to drive cars. The end of the ban was ordered as part of the reforms pushed by King's young son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Saudi Arabia has been widely criticised for being the only country in the world that bans women from driving.

The driving ban had been a longstanding stain on

Saudi Arabia's international image.

In Saudi Arabia, women are legally subject to a male guardian, who must give approval to basic decisions they make in fields including education, employment, marriage, travel plans and even medical treatment.

Women in the kingdom are also bound by law to wear long robes and a headscarf and require the consent of a male guardian for most legal actions.

However, there has been gradual improvement on some women's issues in recent years ever since Mohammed Bin Salman was appointed as the Crown Prince on June 21, 2017.

Timeline to the road of reform

September 2017: King Salman issues a decree ending the decades-long ban from June 24, 2018.
 October 2017: Princess Nourah University announced to open a driving school for women.
 January 2018: Jeddah's Le Mall opened the kingdom's first car showroom aimed at women.
 June 2018: Saudi Arabia began issuing Driving licenses to women ahead of the lifting of the ban.

INDIA, SEYCHELLES INK

6 AGREEMENTS IN SEVERAL FIELDS

Why in News: India and Seychelles signed six Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to further expand bilateral ties between the two sides in various fields. These include areas of naval cooperation, cybersecurity, culture, development projects among others.

Important Points:

The MoUs were signed in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Seychelles President Danny Antoine Rollen Faure after the two leaders held bilateral talks in Hyderabad House, New Delhi.

India has announced US \$100-million credit to Seychelles for augmenting its defence capabilities. It also announced to hand over second Dornier aircraft to Seychelles as promised by PM Modi during his visit there in 2015. The aircraft will reach Seychelles before its National Day on June 29, 2018.

Assumption Island: Both India and Seychelles have agreed to work together on project to develop naval base at Assumption Island keeping each other's concerns in mind. Both countries are key strategic partners for each other and they respect the core values of democracy. They share geo-strategic vision of maintaining peace, security and stability in Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Defence and security cooperation: Both countries share robust defence and security cooperation. The US \$100-million credit from India to enable Seychelles to buy defence equipment to boost its maritime capacity. Both countries have strategic convergence in dealing with maritime challenges.

Both countries are straddled between one of important Sea Lanes of Communication and vulnerable to piracy. They face dangers of international crimes such as piracy, drugs, human trafficking and illegal exploitation of oceanic resources. India is committed to augment Seychelles defence capabilities, maritime infrastructure and increase capabilities of its defence personnel.

Signed agreements are:

MoU regarding Indian Grant Assistance for implementation of small development projects through local bodies, educational and vocational institutions.

Twinning Agreement on Establishment of Friendship and Cooperation between Panaji (Municipal Corporation), Goa (India) and Victoria City of Seychelles

MoU in the area of Cyber Security: It was signed between Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-in) and Seychelles' Department of Information Communications Technology.

Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Seychelles for the years 2018-2022

Technical Agreement on Sharing White Shipping Information between Indian Navy and National Information Sharing and Coordination Center of Seychelles: It will enable the two countries to exchange data regarding identity and movement of non-military commercial vessels

MoU between Foreign Service Institute (FSI) of Ministry of External Affairs of India and Department of Foreign Affairs of Seychelles.

MAHARASHTRA PLASTIC BAN TO COST 3 LAKH JOBS, LOSS OF RS 15,000 CRORE

Why in News: Maharashtra government recently began enforcing a ban on plastic, a decision it announced in March. The government had given the manufacturers, distributors, and consumers a period of three months to dispose their existing stock and come up with alternatives to plastic usage.

Important Points:

Officials from Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) and district and local administration have been authorised to implement it. For regulating this law at tourist locations, tourism police, or Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation has been made responsible.

The government has also formed an association comprising of plastic manufacturers, ministry officials and environmental experts to oversee the implementation of the ban.

Under the notification products manufactured from plastic and thermocol have been covered under the ban.

As a result usage of plastic bags with a handle and without handle, disposable cups, and plates, spoons, forks, glasses, and containers is prohibited in the state, will result in loss of up to Rs 15,000 crore and nearly 3 lakh job, says the plastic manufacturing industry. .

Plastic packaging used to wrap and store the product is also included in the ban.

Apart from this plastic straw, non-woven polypropene bags, pouches and any other plastic used to store, package and transfer food items will no longer be permitted in the state. Besides, it has banned the use of plastic and thermocol for decoration purposes.

On World Environment Day, June 5, India was the host nation, with the theme for this year being 'Beat

plastic pollution.'

The civic authorities have imposed a fine of Rs 5,000 for the first-time offenders and Rs 10,000 for the second-time offenders. Those who violate the ban for the third time will face a fine of Rs 25,000, along with a three-month imprisonment.

Plastic items excluded from the ban:

Plastic used for packaging medicines and drugs. Food grade virgin plastic used for packaging milk.

Compostable packaging bags used for horticulture and agriculture purposes.

Plastic bags used for exporting goods. Plastic used at the manufacturing stage. Plastic used for handling of solid waste.

What's Next?

While environmentalists welcomed the cabinet's decision, the plastic industry has slammed the government calling it "retrograde step." With its huge dependence on plastic and lack of alternatives to the banned products, many also wonder if the plan would be a success.

REPORT ON 'WOMEN IN PRISONS' LAUNCHED BY THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Why in News: The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has come up with its report titled 'Women in Prisons' which aims to build an understanding of the various entitlements of women in prisons, the various issues faced by them and possible methods for resolution of the same. The report contains a comprehensive list of 134 recommendations for improving the lives of women under incarceration, addressing a wide range of issues pertaining to pregnancy and childbirth in prison, mental health, legal aid, reintegration in society and their caregiving responsibilities among others. Various changes in the National Model Prison Manual 2016 have also been suggested to bring it in line with international standards and norms.

Speaking about the report, Honourable Minister for Women and Child Development Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi has said that this initiative should change the way prison administration perceives women inmates.

'Women in Prisons' Report

The report covers a wide range of issues that women face in prisons. It not only considers the needs of pregnant women, but also those who have recently given birth, those who have miscarried, or those who have recently undergone abortion.

It suggests that the women with care-giving responsibilities must be allowed to make arrangements for their children prior to their imprisonment. If there is no family or friends to look after the child (above 6 years of age), then he must be placed in a **Child Care Institution**.

It proposes amendment in Section 436A of the CrPC for granting bail to those under-trial women who have spent one-third of their maximum possible sentence in detention.

It recommends separate accommodation for mothers in post-natal stage to maintain hygiene and protect the infant from infection for at least a year after childbirth.

It suggests special provisions for women who have recently given birth outside prison, or who have undergone abortion or miscarriage. It also suggests that pregnant women must be given information and access to abortion during imprisonment.

It suggests that legal consultations must be conducted in confidentiality and without censorship.

It proposes re-integration programme for released women, covering employment, financial support, regaining of child custody, continuity of health care services etc.

It recommends that prison authorities should coordinate with local police to ensure released prisoners are not harassed by them due to the attached stigma.

It recommends robust grievance redressal system for women to tackle cases of sexual harassment, violence and abuse against women in jails. Apart from the prisoner herself, her legal adviser or family members should be allowed to make complaints regarding her stay in prison.

Inmates should have access to female counselors or psychologists at least on a weekly basis or as frequently as needed by them.

Background:

As per most recent data available from the end of 2015, there are 4,19,623 persons in jail in India, of which, 17,834 (about 4.3%) are women. Of these, 11,916 (66.8%) are undertrial prisoners. In India, an analysis of prison statistics at five-year intervals reveals an increasing trend in the number of women prisoners - from 3.3% of all prisoners in 2000 to 4.3% in 2015. A majority of female inmates are in the age group of 30-50 years (50.5%), followed by 18-30 years (31.3%). Of the total 1,401 prisons in India, only 18 are exclusive for women, housing 2,985 female prisoners. Thus, a majority of women inmates are housed in women's enclosures of general prisons.

MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT TO ORGANISE POSHAN ABHIYAAN TECH-THON

Why in News: ICDS-CAS (Common Application Software) has been specially designed to strengthen the Service Delivery System as well as the mechanism for Real Time Monitoring (RTM) for nutritional outcomes. Briefing the media on the upcoming POSHAN Abhiyaan TECH-THON, WCD Secretary Sh. Rakesh Srivastava said that it looks at improving the nutrition outcomes through effective monitoring, timely intervention and also act as a fact-based decision-making tool.

POSHAN Abhiyaan TECH-THON:

The upcoming POSHAN Abhiyaan TECH-THON is aimed at improving the nutrition outcomes through effective monitoring and timely intervention.

The Vice Chairman of the NITI Aayog will inaugurate the Seminar and launch the Jan Andolan Guidelines of POSHAN Abhiyaan.

It will showcase and familiarise the people towards the initiative, exchange ideas to explore avenues of cooperation and partnerships for technology support, as well as, reach-out to the beneficiaries for effective behavioural change to initiate a 'Peoples Movement' or 'Jan Andolan' towards Nutrition. The Seminar will witness the presence of Ministers, top policy makers, participants from multilateral partner institutions like UNICEF, World Bank, WHO, WFP, Tata Trust, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) etc, Philanthropic Private Sectors and Civil Society Organizations.

Leading experts from a range of fields will be present to lead panel discussions and share insights on addressing avenues of cooperation and partnerships for technology support.

An exhibition will also be organised showcasing the technology and other materials of POSHAN Abhiyaan in the gallery of Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra.

Approximately 300 participants are expected to grace the Seminar

About ICDS-CAS (Common Application Software):

The Ministry also announced the development of the ICDS-CAS (Common Application Software) to strengthen the service delivery system as well as the mechanism for Real Time Monitoring for nutritional outcomes through effective monitoring and timely interventions in POSHAN Abhiyaan.

By the year 2020, the application will be rolled out across 14 lakh Anganwadis and would impact 10 Crore beneficiaries.

It is currently the largest e-Nutrition & Health programme in the World having 1.1 lakh data entry devices with frontline functionaries across 7 States - Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

It enables data capture, ensures assigned service delivery and prompts for interventions wherever required.

It makes available the data to the supervisory staff from sector, block, district, state to national level through a dashboard for monitoring purpose.

About POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission):

POSHAN Abhiyaan, also known as National Nutrition Mission, was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 8, 2018 in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan. The initiative, largely, aims to scale-up the interventions supported by the World Bank assisted Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Systems Strengthening and Nutrition Improvement Project (ISSNIP) to all districts in the country over a 3-year period. The POSHAN Abhiyaan empowers the frontline functionaries such as the Anganwadi Workers and Lady Supervisors by providing them with Smartphones.

The programme through the targets will strive to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anemia and low birth weight babies. It will create synergy, ensure better monitoring, issue alerts for timely action, and encourage States/UTs to perform, guide and supervise the line Ministries and States/UTs to achieve the targeted goals.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN RESEARCHERS CREATE WORLD'S SMALLEST COMPUTER

Why in News: Researchers at the University of Michigan (UM) in the US have developed the world's smallest computer "Michigan Micro Mote". It measures just 0.3 mm and could help find new ways to monitor and treat cancer. Researchers have made this computer to help in the medical field.

In March 2018, IBM released a small computer, which was just one MM size, smaller than a salt grain. But now scientists from the University of Michigan have made the world's smallest computer. Its size is only 0.3 millimeters.

Important Points:

The world's smallest computer can provide accurate information to detect the pressure inside the patient's eyes suffering from glaucoma.

Michigan Micro-Mot can be used in cutting-edge cancer research. By entering it into cells, their temperature can be detected and the correct approximation of the condition can be applied.

This smallest computer can also be used for monitoring functions, such as monitoring of oil reservoirs, monitoring of biochemical, audio and visual input, etc. It can also be used.

It runs on small or computer light process which is called photovoltaics. The data is transmitted through the light. There are processors, RAM and wireless transmitters. It is now made in the form of an accurate temperature sensor - especially for the temperature of cancer cells.

Features of Michigan Micro Mot:

It is a computer that is only 0.3 millimeter size and it can help in detecting complex diseases like cancer and opening new doors for its treatment.

In the new device, RAM and photovoltaics have been replaced by processors, wireless transmitters and receivers.

This device receives and transmits data with the help of light in place of radio antenna.

A base station has been built to provide power to the device and the lighting for programming. With the help of this, device data also receives.

It can be used like a temperature sensor.

Designed as a precision temperature sensor, the computer can report temperatures in minuscule regions - such as a cluster of cells - with an error of about 0.1 degrees Celsius.

The system is very flexible and could be re-imagined for a variety of purposes. The device can help in oncology research. The study was presented at the 2018 Symposia on VLSI Technology and Circuits.

INDIA IS WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS COUNTRY FOR WOMEN

Why in News: India is the world's most dangerous country for women, according to a survey of 550 experts on women's issues conducted by the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia and Saudi Arabia. In 2011, a similar poll ranked India fourth, just below Pakistan.

This year's survey was conducted between March 26 and May 4, and released on Tuesday (June 26).

Important Points:

Levels of violence against women are very high in India, despite government promises to address the issue after a student was raped and murdered on a bus in Delhi five years ago. It ranked most dangerous on three issues - the risks women face from sexual violence and harassment, from cultural and traditional practices, and from human trafficking including forced labor, sex slavery and domestic servitude.

Nearly seventeen years after the Taliban was overthrown women still face intense struggles in Afghanistan. It ranked number one for discrimination and second for cultural traditions which includes acid attacks; female genital mutilation; child marriage; forced marriage; stoning, physical abuse or mutilation as a form of punishment/retribution and female infanticide.

Syria has faced seven years of civil war and came third in the poll. Syria ranked second for healthcare, which includes general health access to optometrists, dentists, general doctors and specialist doctors who have expertise knowledge in disabilities, diseases or dealing with trauma. It also ranked third - joint with the US - for sexual violence, which includes rape as a weapon of war; domestic rape; rape by a stranger; the lack of access to justice in rape cases; sexual harassment and coercion into sex as a form of corruption.

Somalia has been steeped in conflict since 1991. It was named the third most dangerous country for women in terms of access to healthcare and for putting them at risk of harmful cultural and traditional practices and fifth worst in terms of women having access to economic resources.

Saudi Arabia ranked second for discrimination after Afghanistan. This includes job discrimination; an inability to make a livelihood; discriminatory land, property or inheritance rights; a lack of access to education and a lack of access to adequate nutrition. It came fifth in terms of the risks women face from cultural and religious practices.

In sixth place, Pakistan is fourth worst in terms of economic resources and discrimination as well as the risks women face from cultural, religious and traditional practices, including so-called honour killings. It ranked fifth on non-sexual violence, including domestic abuse.

The United Nations has said that millions of people exist in "hellish living conditions" in the DRC. It was polled the second most dangerous country for women when it came to sexual violence.

Yemen is suffering from a humanitarian crisis, with 22 million people in need of vital aid. It ranked poorly on healthcare, economic resources, risk from cultural and traditional practices, and non-sexual violence.

Nigeria has struggled for nine years against Boko Haram militants. It came joint fourth with Russia as the most dangerous country for human trafficking.

The US was the only western country to make the top 10. It came joint third with Syria for the risks women face in terms of sexual violence, including rape, sexual harassment, coercion into sex and a lack of access to justice in rape cases. The survey followed the #MeToo campaign where thousands of women came together online to share their stories of sexual harassment or abuse.

Background:

The poll was a repeat of a survey in 2011 that found experts saw Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, India, and Somalia as the most dangerous countries for women. The survey asked respondents which five of the 193 United Nations member states they thought were most dangerous for women and which country was worst in terms of healthcare, economic resources, cultural or traditional practices, sexual violence and harassment, non-sexual violence and human trafficking.

FSSAI PROPOSES LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR FOOD ADULTERATION

Why in News: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recommended stringent punishment for those adulterating food products following the Supreme Court order. Now, those adulterating food products could face life imprisonment and penalty of up to Rs 10 lakh. The recommendations are the part of amendments proposed by the FSSAI to amend the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

Key amendments to the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006

The regulator has proposed as many as 100 amendments to the Act and has sought comments

from the public by July 2, 2018. FSSAI has proposed to include a new section to crack down on food adulteration.

The draft proposal recommends insertion of Section 59 in the Act that states the punishment for the food adulterers. It calls for punishment of 7 years, which could be extended up to life imprisonment besides a fine of Rs 10 lakh, if individuals or businesses intentionally add adulterants to food products.

It suggested creation of a 'Food Safety and Nutrition Fund' to support promotional and outreach activities among food businesses and consumers.

It proposed setting up of the state food safety authorities to enforce the law in letter and spirit.

It proposed increase in the punishment for obstructing, impersonating, intimidating and threatening and assaulting a food safety officer. It recommended imprisonment of not less than 6 months and up to two years, besides penalty of up to Rs 5 lakh. At present, the imprisonment in such cases is up to 3 months and fine is up to Rs 1 lakh.

It proposed that a person convicted under this law will have to pay fees and other expenses incidental to the analysis of any food or food contact article and any other reasonable expenses incurred by the prosecution.

The other amendments include regulation of exported food products under the FSS Act. Presently, it covers only sale of food items in domestic market and also imported ones.

The amendments come in the light of the directions of the Supreme Court and have been proposed in line with provision of Singapore's Sale of Food Act.

About FSSAI:

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is a nodal agency responsible for protecting and promoting public health in India through regulation and supervision of food safety. It was established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. It lays down science-based standards for articles of food and regulates their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food to 130 crore citizens. The authority is also responsible for creating an information network across the country so that the public and consumers receive rapid, reliable and accurate information about food safety and hygiene.

HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION OF INDIA BY REPEALING UGC ACT

Why in News: In a landmark decision, a Higher Education Commission of India (Repeal of University Grants Commission Act) Bill 2018 which seeks to repeal UGC Act and provides for setting up of Higher Education Commission of India has been prepared by the Ministry of HRD and placed in public domain for comments and suggestions. The focus of Higher Education Commission of India will be on improving academic standards and the quality of Higher Education.

The Minister also stated that "The draft Act is in accordance with the commitment of Government for reforming the regulatory systems that provide for more autonomy and facilitate holistic growth of the education system." The Minister has appealed to all educationists, stakeholders and the general public to give comments and suggestions on the draft legislation before July 7, 2018.

Highlights of the Higher Education Commission of India (Repeal of University Grants Commission Act) Bill 2018

The focus of the Commission will be on improving academic standards and quality of higher education, specifying norms for learning outcomes, lay down standards of teaching/research etc.

It will provide a roadmap for mentoring of institutions found failing in maintaining the required academic standards.

It shall have the power to enforce its decisions through legal provisions in the Act,

The Commission shall have the power to grant authorization for starting of academic operations on the basis of their compliance with norms of academic quality.

It will also have the powers to revoke authorization granting to a higher education institution where there is a case of wilful or continuous default in compliance with the norms / regulations.

It will also have the power to recommend closure of institutions which fail to adhere to minimum standards without affecting students' interest.

The Commission will encourage higher education institutions to formulate a Code of

Good Practices covering promotion of research, teaching and learning.

The constitution of the Commission is strengthened by the cooption of Chairpersons of regulatory bodies in higher education, namely the AICTE and the NCTE.

Moreover the Chairpersons/Vice-Chairpersons and members will be scholars of eminence and standing in the field of academics and research, possessing leadership qualities, proven capacities for institution building and deep understanding of

issues of higher education policy and practice.

The Bill also provides for the penal provisions, which albeit graded in nature, will cover withdrawal of power to grant degrees/ diplomas or direction to cease academic operations and in cases of wilful non-compliance, may result in prosecution sanction as per the Criminal Procedure Code with a punishment of imprisonment for a term which may extend up to 3 years.

There will be an Advisory Council to render advice to the Commission on matters concerning coordination and determination of standards in the country. This will be represented by the Chairpersons / Vice-Chairpersons of State Councils for Higher Education and chaired by the Union Minister for HRD.

The Commission will also specify norms and processes for fixing of fee chargeable by higher education institutions and advice the Central Government or the State Governments, as the case may be, regarding steps to be taken for making education affordable to all.

The Commission will monitor, through a national data base, all matters covering the development of emerging fields of knowledge and balanced growth of higher education institutions in all spheres and specially in promotion of academic quality in higher education.

Transformation of the higher education set up is guided by the following principles:

Less Government and More Governance: To Downsizing the scope of the Regulation and ensure minimum interference in the management issues of the educational institutions.

Separation of grant functions: The grant functions will now be done by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, and the HECI would focus only on academic matters.

End of inspection raj: Regulation will now be done through transparent public disclosures, merit-based decision making on matters regarding standards and quality in higher education.

Focus on academic quality: HECI has been mandated to improve academic standards with specific focus on learning outcomes, evaluation of academic performance by institutions, mentoring of institutions, training of teachers and promote use of educational technology.

Powers to enforce: HECI will have powers to enforce compliance to the academic quality standards and will have the power to order closure of bogus institutions.

FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE PUTS

PAKISTAN ON 'GREY LIST'

Why in News: The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) added Pakistan to its 'grey list' of countries involved in providing monetary assistance to terrorism and related causes. The decision was taken during FATF meeting on Money Laundering in Paris. At the FATF talks in Paris, a delegation led by Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Pakistani Interim Minister for Finance and Planning, apprised the FATF of steps taken by Pakistan to curb terror financing and money laundering, pleading removal of Pakistan's name from FATF grey list.

Important Points:

Pakistan had earlier been included in the 'grey list' from 2012 to 2015.

Dr Shamshad Akhtar, who reached Paris on June 24, 2018 alongside officials of the financial monitoring unit to fight the country's case, had requested the FATF to remove Pakistan from its grey list.

During the crucial meeting, the Pakistani delegation talked about Islamabad's efforts against the banned outfits and various terrorist groups.

The Pakistani delegation's case indicated that the country has been working to curb financial assistance for terrorists, made existing laws better and ensured implementation of the these improved regulations.

In compliance with the FATF's recommendations, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), on June 20, 2018 issued the Anti Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism Regulations, 2018.

Prior to that, on June 8, 2018, the National Security

Committee (NSC) of Pakistan had reaffirmed its commitment to cooperate with FATF in achieving common goals and shared objectives.

FATF had earlier taken the decision to place Pakistan on its grey list during a plenary meeting in February 2018.

At that time, China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, leading the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that votes as one bloc, were against Pakistan being put in the grey list.

The grey list puts countries under the scanner for not implementing the objectives of the task force.

As per FATF rules, three votes from the FATF's members are needed for not putting a country in the grey list. It was believed that Pakistan was likely to be granted more time to implement necessary measures to be compliant with the FATF's anti-money laundering and terrorist financing regulations to avoid its entry into the grey list again.

However, as per the sources, FATF was under pressure from the United States and India to put Pakistan on the grey list, both the countries also compelled Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and China to agree on the same.

About Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the Ministers of its Member jurisdictions. Established during the G7 Summit in Paris (France), the organisation aims to establish international standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing and seeks to combat the growing problem of money laundering. FATF Secretariat is housed at the headquarters of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris. FATF's decision making body is the 'FATF Plenary'. The FATF plenary sessions are held in February, June and October every year. It consists of over 39 member countries including India. Currently, China is the Vice President of the FATF.

BAN ON GROWTH DRUG OXYTOCIN COMES INTO EFFECT FROM JULY 1

Why in News: Major curbs on the production and sale of growth hormone oxytocin will come into effect from July 1 with the government determined to end its misuse. Its import also has been banned

All private manufacturing of oxytocin will end from July 1 and its production for domestic use will be restricted to only one public sector company, Karnataka Antibiotics and Pharmaceuticals Limited (KAPL).

Important Points:

It also has not allowed retail or wholesale chemists to stock this drug in their shops in any form or name. Jenceforth, Karnataka Antibiotics & Pharmaceuticals Ltd will only manufacture the drug and supply it directly to registered private and public hospitals.

This move follows a previous ban on imports of oxytocin used heavily in enhancing puberty among child victims of sex trafficking, inducing child birth and boosting the growth of vegetables and fruits.

Oxytocin

Oxytocin, often called love hormone, is released naturally in human bonding activities such as childbirth, breastfeeding and sex. It is uterine stimulant hormone, prescribed for initiation of uterine contractions and induction of labour in women as well as stimulation of contractions during labour. It is also used to help abort fetus in cases of incomplete abortion or miscarriage, and control bleeding after childbirth. It may be used for breast engorgement.

It has become controversial hormonal injection that is misused widely in the dairy industry, agriculture and horticulture. The drug's abuse in dairy animals to make them release milk at a time convenient to farmers, shortens their lives and makes them barren sooner. The hormone is also used to increase size of vegetables such as pumpkins, watermelons, brinjals, gourds and cucumbers. Even its misuse is reported among trafficked children, injected to accelerate puberty among girls. It is also being misused to speed up deliveries for pregnant women in overcrowded government hospitals.

GLOBAL REAL ESTATE TRANSPARENCY INDEX

Why in News: India was ranked 35th among 100 countries (countries) in recently released Global Real Estate Transparency Index (GRETl). The index was released by realty consultant JLL. India was ranked 36th in the index during the last bi-annual survey conducted in 2016 and 40th in 2014. Its real estate market is currently placed in the 'semi-transparent' zone.

Important Points:

Top 10 countries are: United Kingdom (1st), Australia (2nd), United States (3rd), France (4th), Canada (5th), Netherlands (6th), New Zealand (7th), Germany (8th), Ireland (9th) and Sweden (10th).

Top 5 **worst performers**: Venezuela (100), Libya (99),

Senegal (98), Mozambique (97) and Ivory Coast (96).

BRICS countries: South Africa was ranked at 21st position, followed by China (33rd), Brazil (37th) and Russia (38th).

South Asia: Sri Lanka (66th position), Pakistan (75th).

India related Facts: In this edition of index, India has moved up one place due to improvement in market fundamentals, policy reforms, and liberalisation of FDI. Besides, digitisation of property records and industry status accorded to affordable housing also has helped India to improve its rankings. India has emerged as one of the top ten countries to register maximum improvement in transparency in real estate over the last two years.

GRETl ranks 100 markets based on combination of quantitative market data and survey results across on 186 individual measures divided into 14 topic areas grouped and weighted into six broad sub-indices: performance measurement (weightage 28.5%), market fundamentals (16.5%), governance of listed vehicles (10%), regulatory and legal (25%), transaction process (15%) and sustainability (5%). The index scores markets on scale of 1 (being highest possible score) to 5 (lowest score). Depending on their overall performance, markets are assigned to one of five transparency tiers viz. highly transparent, transparent, semi-transparent, low transparency and opaque.

'REUNITE' MOBILE APP

Why in News: Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu launched a mobile application - ReUnite - to trace missing and abandoned children in India. This effort to reunite parents whose children have gone missing is a wonderful use of technology to address real life social challenges. The app has been developed jointly by NGO 'Bachpan Bachao Andolan' and IT major Capgemini.

Important Points:

The app is multiuser where parents and citizens can upload pictures of children, and provide detailed description like name, birth mark, address, report to the police station, search and identify missing kids.

The app will work to reunite parents with their children who have gone missing.

The photographs will not be saved in the mobile phone's physical memory.

Amazon Rekognition, web facial recognition service, is being used within the app to identify missing kids. The app is available for both Android and iOS.

About Bachpan Bachao Andolan:

Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) is an NGO and India's largest movement for the protection of children and works along with law enforcement agencies and policymakers. It was founded by Kailash Satyarthi, a social activist and Nobel Laureate.

BBA pioneered the first consulted effort in the country on the issue of missing children and its linkages with trafficking in the case involving missing children of Nithari in 2006. The case led the Supreme Court pass the landmark judgement in 2013 ordering that FIR has to be lodged in all cases of missing children.

Facts and Figures:

Every year, around 44,000 children go missing in the country, of which, just 11000 are rescued.

As per the BBA study, 117480 children were reported missing, 74209 were traced and 41546 remained untraced in two years between 2008 and 2010.

Among 20 states and 4 UTs, Maharashtra (26211) reported highest number of missing children followed by West Bengal (25413), Delhi (13,570) and Madhya Pradesh (12,777).

Maharashtra (1,706) also has the highest number of traced children followed by Delhi (11870), Madhya Pradesh (9537), Uttar Pradesh (7586), West Bengal (6653) and Karnataka (3522).

SOLAR CHARKHA MISSION

Why in News: President Ram Nath Kovind launched Solar Charkha Mission under which Government will disburse subsidy of Rs 550 crore to thousands of artisans, generating employment in rural areas. It was launched during the event of Udyam Sangam (National MSME Conclave) on the occasion of World MSME Day (observed on 27 June).

Important Points:

Under this mission, Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) will cover 50 clusters across the country including in the Northeast and each cluster will employ 400 to 2,000 artisans.

Its ultimate aim is to generate employment in rural areas and contribute to the green economy. It also aims at linking five crore women across the country to the initiative.

The mission is expected to create one lakh jobs during the first two years.

Sampark portal:

President Kovind also launched the 'Sampark portal', a digital platform to connect five lakh job seekers with recruiters.

This digital platform will be useful in creating a skill pool of workers and connecting trained youth with job opportunities.

About Indian Micro, Small and Medium Enter-prises Sector:

The Indian MSME sector provides maximum opportunities for both self-employment and wage-employment outside the agricultural sector. The sector generates around 100 million jobs through over 46 million units situated throughout the geographical expanse of the country. Besides the wide range of services provided by the sector, the sector is engaged in the manufacturing of over 6,000 products ranging from traditional to hi-tech items. Currently, MSME sector leverages demographic dividend of the country and promotes inclusive growth in rural and backward areas. The sector accounted for around 60 percent employment in India.

There are about 6.5 crore MSMEs in India which have created over 11 crore job opportunities. Such enterprises have registered over 10 percent growth in recent times which is much more compared to large enterprises. At Present, the Ministry of MSME is working to set up 15 new modern technology centres all over the country including in the Northeast. Each centre is being built at a cost of around Rs 150 crore.

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