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ESE-2020

(Preliminary Examination)

Current Issues

(August - 2020)

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15 All India 1st Ranks in ESE

57 All India 1st Ranks in GATE

Current Issues

(August -2020)

Gramodyog Vikas Yojana:

- Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has approved a programme for the benefit of artisans involved in manufacturing of Agarbatti under the 'Gramodyog Vikas Yojana'.
- Initially four Pilot Projects will be started, including one in North Eastern part of the country.
- Each targeted cluster of artisans will be supported with about 50 Automatic Agarbatti making machines and 10 Mixing machines.
- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) will provide training, and assist artisans working in this area.
- The programme aims to enhance the production of 'Agarbatti' in the country and create sustainable employment for the traditional Artisans, by providing them regular employment and increase in their wages. This will give a boost to the domestic Agarbatti Industry in the country and will reduce imports of Agarbatti.

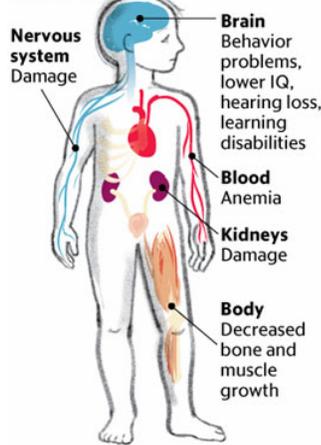
Lead Poisoning: UNICEF Report

- Lead poisoning is affecting children on a massive and previously unknown scale, according to a new report launched by UNICEF and Pure Earth.
- The report, the first of its kind, says that around 1 in 3 children – up to 800 million globally – have blood lead levels at or above 5 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$), the level at which requires action. Nearly half of these children live in South Asia.
- The report from the United Nations Children's Fund titled 'The Toxic Truth: Children's exposure to lead pollution undermines a generation of potential', says that India has over 275 million children with blood lead levels higher than considered safe (five micrograms per decilitre). This is also the highest number of lead poisoning cases in children of any country.
- Childhood lead exposure has also been linked to mental health and behavioural problems, and to an increase of crime and violence. Older children suffer severe consequences including increased risk of kidney damage and cardiovascular diseases in later life, the report says.

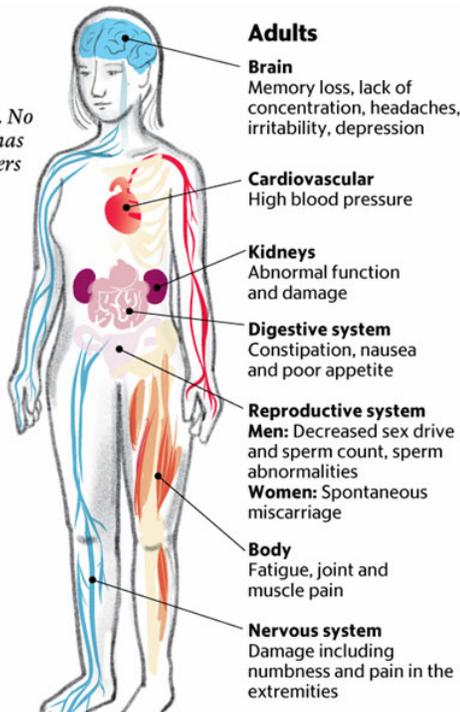
Lead exposure

Although often without obvious symptoms, lead exposure can affect nearly every part of the human body. No safe level of lead in the bloodstream has been determined by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

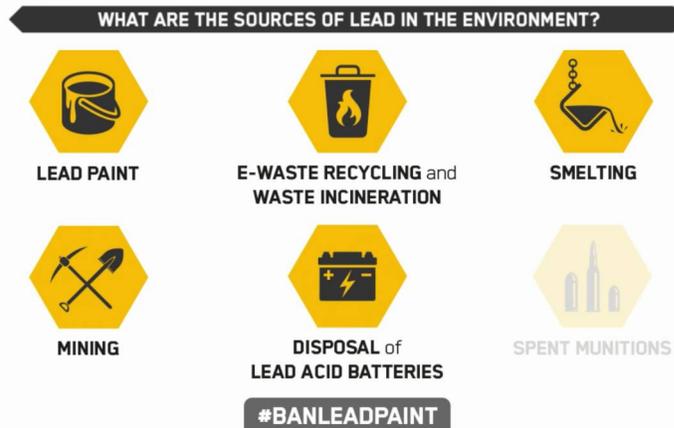
Children



Adults



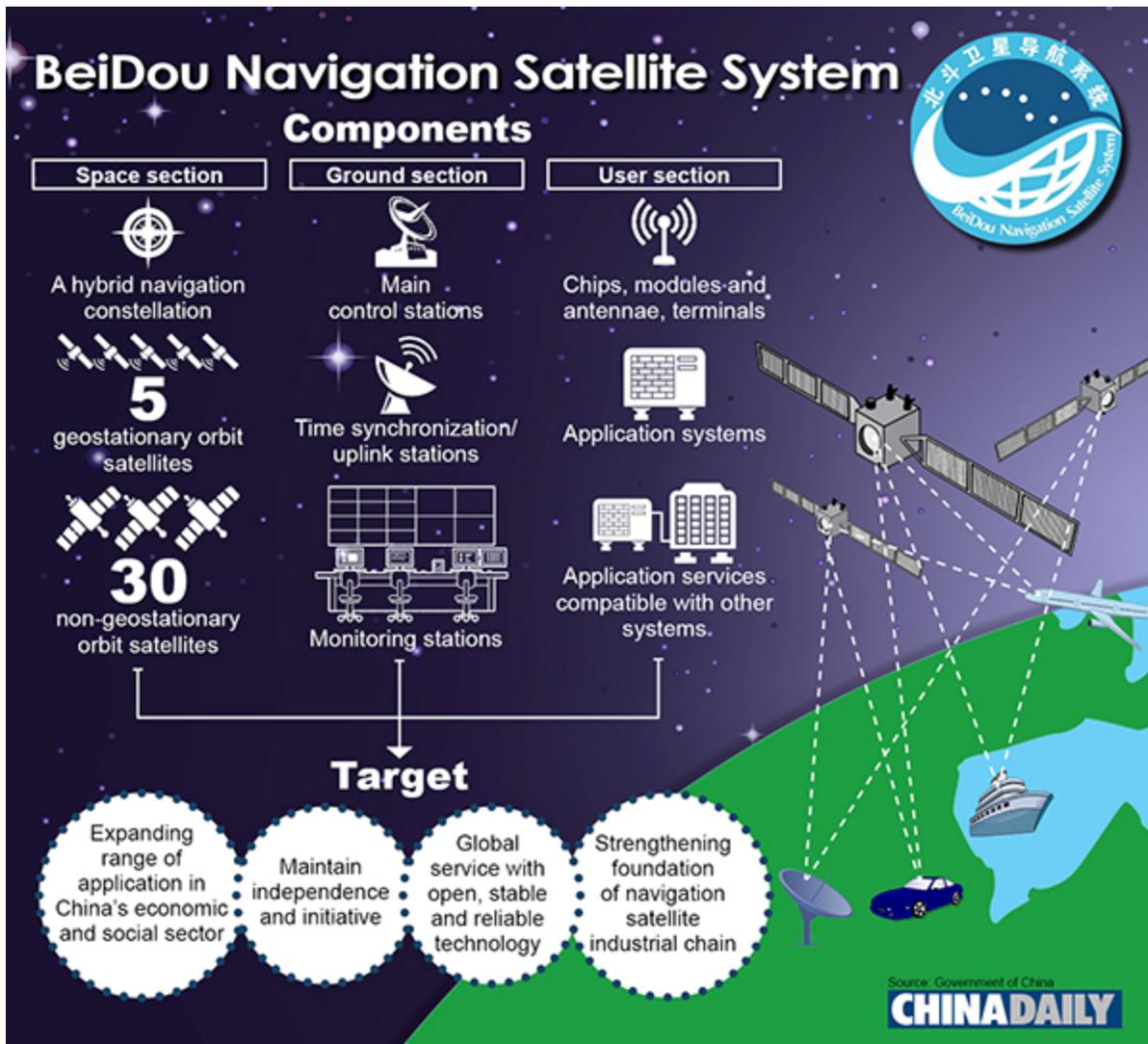
- The report notes that informal and substandard recycling of lead-acid batteries is a leading contributor to lead poisoning in children living in low and middle-income countries.



- The increase in vehicle ownership, combined with the lack of vehicle battery recycling regulation and infrastructure, has resulted in up to 50 per cent of lead-acid batteries being unsafely recycled in the informal economy.

BeiDou

- It is Chinese Satellite Navigation System.
- As ties between US and China deteriorated, it had become more important for China to have its own navigation system that the US does not have control over.
- By completing BeiDou, China now has its own navigation system, which will compete with systems developed by other countries.
- The system uses a network of satellites and can provide positional accuracies of under ten metres (GPS provides positioning accuracies of under 2.2 metres).
- China initiated BeiDou in 1994 with aims to integrate its application in different sectors, including fishery, agriculture, special care, mass-market applications, forestry and public security.



- BeiDou offers services including accurate positioning, navigation and timing as well as short message communication.
- It consists of 27 satellites in medium Earth orbit, five in geostationary orbit and three more in inclined geosynchronous orbits.
- It is of foremost importance in allowing China's military to employ Beidou-guided conventional strike weapons.

The GPS is owned by the US government and operated by the US Air Force.

Russia has its navigation system called GLONASS.

The European Union (EU) has Galileo.

India's navigation system is called Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC).

National Transit Pass System (NTPS)

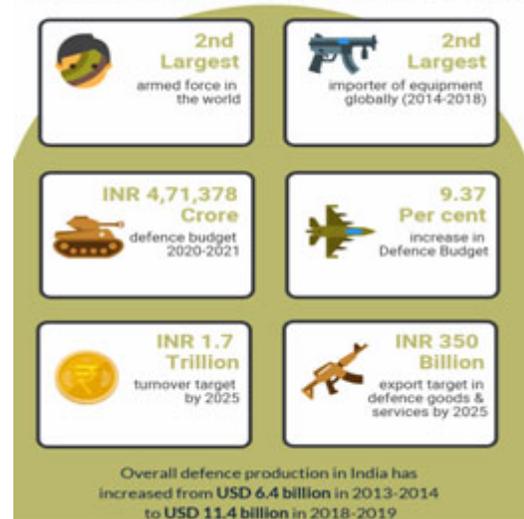
- It is an online transit pass generation system for timber, bamboo and other forest produce.
- It was launched recently by the Union Environment Ministry.
- The pilot project will be functional in Madhya Pradesh and Telangana for now.
- It expedites issuance of transit pass system. A transit pass issued will be valid across India. This will enhance seamless movement of forest produce.

Draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy 2020

- Ministry of Defence (MoD) has formulated and released a draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy 2020 (DPEPP 2020).
- The policy has laid out following goals and objectives:
 - To achieve a turnover of Rs 1,75,000 Crores (US\$ 25Bn) including export of Rs 35,000 Crore (US\$ 5 Billion) in Aerospace and Defence goods and services by 2025.
 - To develop a dynamic, robust and competitive Defence industry, including Aerospace and Naval Shipbuilding industry to cater to the needs of Armed forces with quality products.
 - To reduce dependence on imports and take forward "Make in India" initiatives through domestic design and development.
 - To promote export of defence products and become part of the global defence value chains.
 - To create an environment that encourages R&D, rewards innovation, creates Indian IP ownership and promotes a robust and self-reliant defence industry.
 - The share of domestic procurement in overall defence procurement is about 60%. In order to enhance procurement from domestic industry, it is incumbent that procurement is doubled from the current ₹70,000 crore to ₹1,40,000 crore by 2025.

- The Policy brings out multiple strategies under the following focus areas:
 - ✓ Procurement Reforms
 - ✓ Indigenization & Support to MSMEs/Startups
 - ✓ Optimize Resource Allocation
 - ✓ Investment Promotion, FDI & Ease of Doing Business
 - ✓ Innovation and R&D
 - ✓ DPSUs and OFB
 - ✓ Quality Assurance & Testing Infrastructure
 - ✓ Export Promotion

Indian Defence Sector At a Glance



Food System Vision Prize 2020

- It is an invitation for organizations across the globe to develop a Vision of the regenerative and nourishing food system that they aspire to create by the year 2050.
- It was launched by the USA-based ‘The Rockefeller Foundation’, in partnership with the other two organisations – SecondMuse and OpenIDEO- in 2019.
- The prize awards a cash incentive of USD \$200,000.
- Food System Vision is a story about the future that addresses the following six interconnected themes:
 - ✓ Environment
 - ✓ Diets
 - ✓ Economics
 - ✓ Culture
 - ✓ Technology
 - ✓ Policy
- The Rockefeller Foundation has selected Naandi Foundation (a Hyderabad based non-profit organisation), as one of the top 10 ‘Visionaries’ in the world for the Food System Vision 2050 Prize.
- Naandi was recognised for its Arakunomics

Arakunomics is a new integrated economic model that ensures profits for farmers, quality for consumers through regenerative agriculture.

This model is a tribute to the tribal farmers of Araku region for the world-class coffee produced and launched in Paris in 2017 as well as for the high carbon landscape transformation they did in over 955 villages there by planting 25 million trees.

- The success of Arakunomics in Araku region led to Naandi replicating the model to support the livelihood of farming communities in the villages of Wardha, Maharashtra, and later in New Delhi.
- Naandi hopes to expand its “food-print” by creating thousands of farm livelihoods by transforming their agriculture over one million acres spread across India.
- Also, Arakunomics model leads to Food Vision 2050 that follows an “ABCDEFGH” framework centering on:
 - ✓ Agriculture
 - ✓ Biology
 - ✓ Compost
 - ✓ Decentralised decision-making
 - ✓ Entrepreneurs
 - ✓ Families
 - ✓ Global Markets
 - ✓ Headstands or turning current approaches on their head.

Electric vehicle policy @ New Delhi

- Delhi government has launched the Electric Vehicle Policy for the national capital.
- The policy aims to constitute 25% electric vehicles by 2024, which is currently just 0.29% in the in the national capital.
- The government will waive registration fee and road tax.
- It will give incentive of up to ₹30,000 for two-wheelers, autos, e-rickshaws and freight vehicles while for cars, it will provide an incentive of up to ₹1.5 lakh.
- The government will also give low-interest loan on electric commercial vehicles.
- An ‘EV Cell’ will be established to implement the Policy.
- The government will also set up a ‘State Electric Vehicle Board’.
- 200 charging stations will be set up in a year to ensure that people driving these vehicles can get a charging station within the radius of three kilometers.
- The Delhi government will give a ”scrapping incentive” under the electric vehicle policy, which will be first-of-its-kind in the country.
- Youth will be trained so that they get jobs as electric vehicle sector will need them at a large scale after implementation of this policy.
- With this policy, the government aims to generate employment to give a boost to Delhi’s economy and reduce pollution levels in the national capital.

Submarine communications cable

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the Chennai-Andaman and Nicobar Island Submarine Cable System, which will provide better connectivity to the archipelago.
- The foundation stone for the project was laid by PM Modi in December 2018 at Port Blair.
- About 2,300 km of submarine optical fibre cable (OFC) has been laid at a cost of about Rs 1,224 crore to provide better connectivity in the UT.
- It is a cable laid on the sea bed between land-based stations to carry telecommunication signals across stretches of ocean and sea.
- The optical fiber elements are typically individually coated with plastic layers and contained in a protective tube suitable for the environment where the cable will be deployed.
- The project envisages better connectivity from Chennai to Port Blair and seven other Islands — Swaraj Deep (Havelock), Long Island, Rangat, Hutbay (Little Andaman), Kamorta, Car Nicobar and Campbell Bay (Great Nicobar).
- The project is funded by the government through the Universal Service Obligation Fund under the ministry of communications.
- After the launch of the project by PM Modi, the internet bills in Andaman and Nicobar will also come down substantially.
- The total carrying capacity of submarine cables is in the terabits per second, while satellites typically offer only 1,000 megabits per second and display higher latency.
- A typical multi-terabit, transoceanic submarine cable system costs several hundred million dollars to construct.

Krishi Megh

- Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare virtually launched the Krishi Megh (National Agricultural Research & Education System -Cloud Infrastructure and Services) to mitigate the risk, enhance the quality, availability and accessibility of e-governance, research, extension and education in the field of agriculture in India.
- Krishi Megh is the data recovery centre of ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research).
- Krishi Megh has been set up under the National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP).
- The data recovery centre has been set up at National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM), Hyderabad.
- Krishi Megh is equipped with the latest artificial intelligence and deep learning software for building and deploying of deep learning-based applications through image analysis, disease identification in livestock, etc.
- It enables the farmers, researchers, students and policymakers to be more equipped with the updated and latest information regarding agriculture and research.

‘Mega labs’ for COVID-19 testing

- To speed up testing as well as improve the accuracy of testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) positive cases, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is working on developing “mega labs”.
- In these labs, large machines, called Next Generation Sequencing machines (NGS), which are also used for sequencing human genomes, will be repurposed to sequence 1,500-3,000 viral genomes at a go for detecting the SARS-CoV-2 novel coronavirus.
- These genome sequencing machines can substantially detect the possible presence of the virus even in several instances where the traditional RT-PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) tests miss out on them.
- RT-PCR test identifies the SARS-CoV-2 virus by exploring only specific sections of the virus whereas the genome method can read a bigger chunk of virus genome and thereby provide more certainty that the virus in question is indeed the particular coronavirus of interest.
- It can also trace the evolutionary history of the virus and track mutations more reliably.
- The NGS does not need primers and probes, and only needs custom reagents.

Genome Sequencing is figuring out the order of DNA nucleotides, or bases, in a genome—the order of Adenine, Cytosine, Guanine, and Thymine that make up an organism’s DNA.

One Sun, One World, One Grid

- The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has put calls for proposals to the One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG) initiative on hold till further notice.
- OSOWOG initiative was proposed by India to set up a framework for facilitating global cooperation which aims at building a global ecosystem of interconnected renewable energy resources that can be easily shared.
- The vision is ‘The Sun Never Sets’ and is a constant at some geographical location, globally, at any given point of time.



- This grid shall be interconnected with the African power pools also at the later stage.
- It has been taken up under the technical assistance program of the World Bank.
- India would generate 40% of power from non-fossil fuels by 2030 and has called for connecting solar energy supply across borders giving the mantra of ‘One World One Sun One Grid’.
- The proposed integration would lead to reduced project costs, higher efficiencies and increased asset utilization for all the participating entities.
- Resulting economic benefits would positively impact poverty alleviation and support in mitigating water, sanitation, food and other socio-economic challenges.
- It will allow national renewable energy management centers in India to grow as regional and global management centers.

PM-CARES Fund

- Supreme Court has delivered its judgement on PM CARES funds.
- The petition was filed by an NGO named Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL).
- The Court has “refused” to order transfer of funds from the PM CARES Fund to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). They “are two entirely different funds with different object and purpose”.
- PM CARES Fund, being a public charitable trust, “there is no occasion for audit by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India”.
- The Court also rejected the request for a new National Plan under the National Disaster Management Act, 2005, to deal with Covid-19 situation.

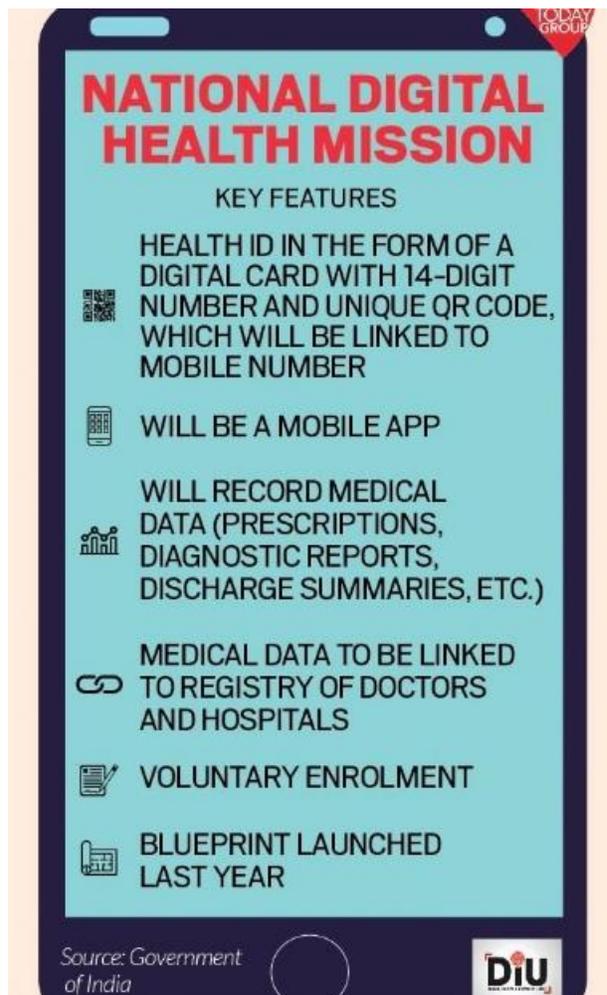
- The court held that there is “no statutory prohibition on individuals to make voluntary contributions to NDRF” under Section 46(1)(b) of the DM Act.
- The court also declined to intervene with the “minimum standards of relief” and the necessary guidelines issued by the government under Section 12 of the DM Act.
- Set up on March 28, the PM CARES Fund is a charitable trust registered under the Registration Act, 1908.
- The trust does not receive any Budgetary support or any Government money.
- It was constituted with an objective to extend assistance in the wake of public health emergency that is pandemic COVID-19”.
- Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of the PM CARES Fund and Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Finance, Government of India are ex-officio Trustees of the Fund.

Vaccine Nationalism

- Even before the end of final stage human trials or regulatory approval, several wealthier countries like Britain, France, Germany and the US have entered into pre-purchase agreements with Covid-19 vaccine manufacturers, a development that has come to be known as “vaccine nationalism”.
- There are fears that such advance agreements will make the initial few vaccines unaffordable and inaccessible to everyone apart from the rich countries in a world of roughly 8 billion people.
- Vaccine nationalism occurs when a country manages to secure doses of vaccine for its own citizens or residents before they are made available in other countries.
- This is done through pre-purchase agreements between a government and a vaccine manufacturer.
- Vaccine nationalism is harmful for equitable access to vaccines.
- It deprives populations in the Global South from timely access to vital public health goods.
- Taken to its extreme, it allocates vaccines to moderately at-risk populations in wealthy countries over populations at higher risk in developing economies.
- International institutions — including the WHO — should coordinate negotiations ahead of the next pandemic to produce a framework for equitable access to vaccines during public health crises.
- Equity entails both, affordability of vaccines and access opportunities for populations across the world, irrespective of geography and geopolitics.
- To bring about equitable and broad access, WHO, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, and Gavi have come up with an initiative known as “Covax Facility”. The facility aims to procure at least two billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines by the end of next year for deployment and distribution mainly in the low- and middle-income countries.

National digital health mission

- In his address to the nation on Independence Day, the PM has launched the National Digital Health Mission which rolls out a national health ID for every Indian.
- It is a digital health ecosystem under which every Indian citizen will now have unique health IDs, digitised health records with identifiers for doctors and health facilities.
- The Mission is expected to bring efficiency and transparency in healthcare services in the country.
- The scheme will be rolled out through a pilot launch in the Union Territories of Chandigarh, Ladakh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.



- The new scheme will come under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.
- It comprises six key building blocks — HealthID, DigiDoctor, Health Facility Registry, Personal Health Records, e-Pharmacy and Telemedicine.

- The National Health Authority has been given the mandate to design, build, roll-out and implement the mission in the country.
- Under the Mission, every Indian will get a Health ID card that will store all medical details of the person including prescriptions, treatment, diagnostic reports and discharge summaries.
- The citizens will be able to give their doctors and health providers one-time access to this data during visits to the hospital for consultation.

Barakah nuclear reactor

- The United Arab Emirates has launched operations at the Arab world's first nuclear power plant, on the Gulf coast just east of Qatar.
- The Barakah nuclear power plant is the United Arab Emirates's first nuclear power station, the first nuclear power station in the Arabian Peninsula, and the first commercial nuclear power station in the Arab World. It consists of four APR-1400 nuclear reactors (one completed and pending operation, three mostly completed).



- Total capacity is 5,600 MW which is intended to supply up to 25% of UAE's energy needs. The site is in the Gharbiya region of Abu Dhabi, on the coastline between the Persian Gulf and the E11 highway, 50 km west of Ruwais.
- Nuclear fission has begun in one of four reactors at the Barakah plant, which uses South Korean technology.

Pakistan's new political map

- The Pakistan cabinet has approved a new political map which includes territories of Jammu and Kashmir and a part of Ladakh. The new political map claims these territories as belonging to Pakistan.
- The map also claims Junagadh, Manavadar and Sir Creek in Gujarat as part of Pakistan.

- The map was launched a day before the one-year anniversary of the Indian government's decision to revoke Article 370 which gave special powers to the state of Jammu and Kashmir as well as the bifurcation of the state into two Union territories.
- Till now, Pakistan has resisted calling the all areas of PoK as a part of its territory officially. While it treats Gilgil-Baltistan as its territory, it calls the rest 'Azad Kashmir'.
- The new map showed Pakistan frontier clearly marked with India with the entire Kashmir as its territory. However, the part of Kashmir and Ladakh border with China was not marked and described as “Frontier Undecided”.
- Similarly, the Line of Control had been extended to the Karakoram Pass, clearing showing Siachen as part of Pakistan. The LoC had been marked by a red dotted line.



Lebanon blast

- On the afternoon of 4 August 2020, two explosions occurred at the port of the city of Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. The second explosion was extremely powerful, and caused at least 220 deaths, 7,000 injuries, US\$10–15 billion in property damage, and left an estimated 300,000 people homeless.
- The event was linked to about 2,750 tonnes (3,030 short tons; 2,710 long tons) of ammonium nitrate – equivalent to around 1.2 kilotons of TNT (5.0 TJ) – which was confiscated by the Lebanese government from the abandoned ship MV Rhosus and then stored in the port without proper safety measures for six years.



- It is considered to be one of the most powerful non-nuclear explosions in history.
- The country's economic downturn, at the centre of which has been a currency crisis, has caused large-scale closure of businesses and soaring prices of basic commodities resulting in social unrest.
- Lebanon's government has resigned amid mounting anger over the explosion.

Muslim Women's Rights Day

- Muslim Women's Rights Day is being celebrated across the nation on August 1st to commemorate the first anniversary of the law against instant triple talaq.
- The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act prohibits the practice of instant divorce by Muslim men. Any violation of the law is punishable by jail term of up to three years.
- The Narendra Modi government made the law against triple talaq following the Supreme Court's judgement of 2017 that declared as unconstitutional the instantaneous practice, followed by Muslim men, of divorcing a wife by uttering the word 'talaq' thrice.



- V Muraleedharan, junior foreign minister, pointed out that there has been an 82% decline in cases of the triple talaq within a year of the implementation of the law.

Under the Muslim law, Triple Talaq means liberty from the relationship of marriage, eventually or immediately, where the man, by simply uttering the word 'talaq' three times, ends his marriage. This instant divorce is called Triple Talaq, also known as 'talaq-e-biddat'.

Vidyarthi Vigyaan Manthan

- Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan (VVM) is an initiative of Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA), in collaboration with Vigyan Prasar, an autonomous organization under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), an institution under the Ministry of Education (earlier known as Ministry of Human Resources and Development).
- VVM is a national program for popularizing science among school students of standard VI to XI, conceptualised to identify the bright minds with a scientific aptitude among the student community.

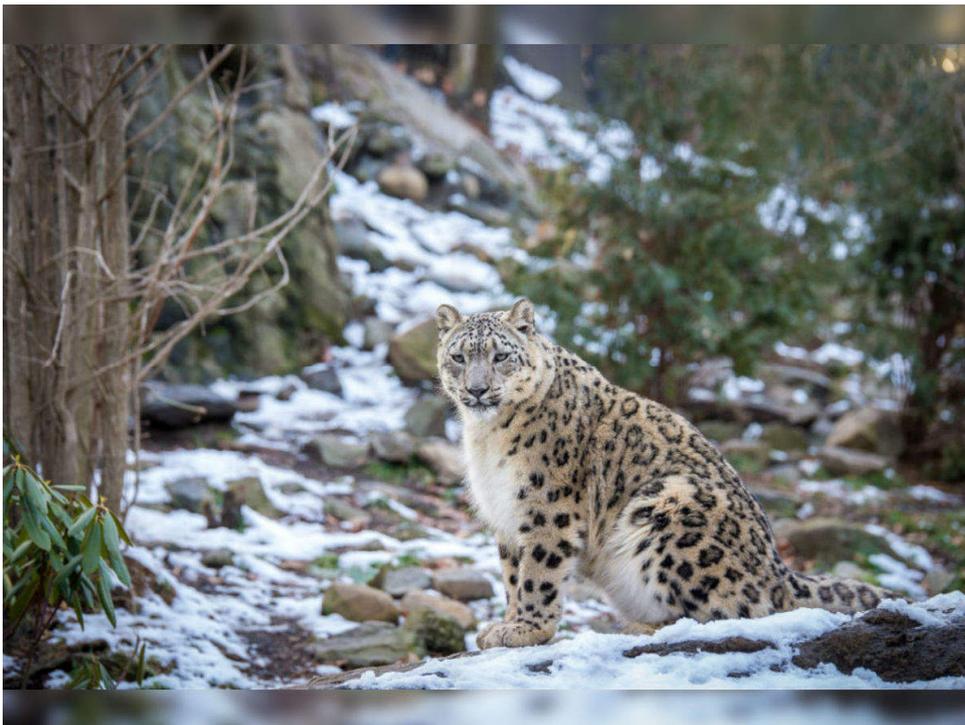
“Innovation Hub” for Financial Inclusion

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday said it will set up an innovation hub to encourage start-ups and companies address the challenges of financial inclusion and efficient banking transactions.

- The hub aims to bring solutions to the financial sector by tapping into areas such as cybersecurity, data analytics, delivery platforms, and payment services.
- The innovation hub will act as a centre for ideation and incubation of new capabilities, which can be leveraged to create innovative and viable financial products or services.
- These will help achieve the wider objectives of deepening financial inclusion, efficient banking services, ensuring business continuity in times of emergency, and strengthening consumer protection

Snow Leopard Conservation Centre

- Uttarakhand is getting ready to set up India's first conservation centre for snow leopards in the forests of Uttarkashi district.
- The goal of setting up the centre is conservation, restoration of Himalayan ecosystems, and creating livelihoods for local people.
- The project also aims at the conservation of other endangered species along with the snow leopards.
- There are around 86 snow leopards in Uttarakhand right now. The state forest department is expected to start a counting with the help of camera traps later this year.



- In Uttarakhand, these elusive cats are found in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, Gangotri National Park, Askot Wildlife Sanctuary, and other places of altitude between 3,000-4,500 meters.

Snow leopards are one of the most enigmatic wild cat species due to their reclusive nature, which is why they are also known as the 'Ghost of the Mountains'.

'Kisan Rail'

- The Indian Railways launched Kisan Rail service, dedicated to farmers for transporting their perishable goods.
- The first train will transport material between Maharashtra's Devlali and Bihar's Danapur Railway station. The Kisan Rail will carry fruits and vegetables and will make stoppages at several stations and pick-up and deliver them.



- The train will cover a distance of one thousand 1,519 kilometres in around 32 hours.
- The train, which will run on a weekly basis, is expected to build a national cold supply chain for perishable items like fish, meat and milk.

Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra - an interactive experience centre on the Swachh Bharat Mission, at the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti at Rajghat, New Delhi.
- The installations at RSK will include audio visual immersive shows, interactive LED panels, hologram boxes, interactive games etc.
- A tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, the Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra (RSK) was first announced by the prime minister on April 10, 2017 on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of Gandhiji's Champaran 'satyagraha'.
- The outdoor view of RSK with Gandhi installation is shown below.



Start-ups come under Priority sector as per new lending norms

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is revising the Priority Sector Lending (PSL) norms to enable higher lending to start-ups and renewable energy firms.
- It intends to align them with emerging national priorities and bring a sharper focus to inclusive development. The revised guidelines also aim to encourage and support environment-friendly lending policies to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Higher weighting will be assigned to incremental priority sector credit in identified districts where credit flow is comparatively lower, whereas a lower weighting will be assigned in case of a comparatively higher credit flow.

Priority Sector Lending is an important role given by the (RBI) to the banks for providing a specified portion of the bank lending to few specific sectors like agriculture and allied activities, micro and small enterprises, poor people for housing, students for education and other low income groups and weaker sections.

Agriculture infrastructure fund

- PM Modi launched a financing facility of Rs 1 lakh crore under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund via video conferencing.
- The Prime Minister also released the sixth installment of funds of Rs 17,000 crore to 8.5 crore farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme.

- “This will help in creating better storage, modern cold storage chain in villages and many employment opportunities will be created in the village,” PM Modi said while launching the facility.

‘Atmanirbhar Bharat Saptah’

- In a bid to push Make-in-India, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched Atma Nirbhar Bharat week on August 10th.
- The idea of the scheme is to give importance to domestic production in the country. The idea of observing a week will provide impetus to Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

‘Cleanliness Week’

- Indian Railways is observing “Cleanliness Week” from 10th August in order to mark the Independence Day.



- The “Cleanliness Week” will include a special Cleanliness drive which will focus on cleaning the the tracks, station offices, colonies, work sites, edge of stations and other areas near railway premises.

First Silk Training Center in Arunachal Pradesh

- The far-flung tribal village of Chullyu in Arunachal Pradesh will soon be bustling with spinning and weaving activities with the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) set to open the first-of-its kind training-cum-production centre of silk in the state.
- The training cum production centre is the first of its kind facility in Arunachal Pradesh and a big boost to the weaving activities in the entire region.

- The development assumes significance as the tribal population in Arunachal Pradesh, men and women alike, traditionally wear Eri Silk and Khadi cotton clothes which carries a deep significance to their egalitarian tribal society.



India is the second-largest producer of silk in the world. There are various kinds of silk produced in the world among which the most common one is Mulberry silk which accounts for around 74.51% of the total silk production in the country. Apart from that, Tasar, Eri, Muga, etc. are some other kinds of silk produced. In India, 97% of mulberry silk is produced in five Indian states, namely, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

‘National portal of Project Elephant’

- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has launched National Portal on Human-Elephant conflict situation so that it can resolve the dispute between the human and the elephant.
- The National Portal has been launched on the occasion of the World Elephant Day on August 12.
- The National Portal on human elephant conflict called “Surakhsya” for collection of real time information & also for managing the conflicts on a real time basis will help to set the data collection protocols, data transmission pipelines and data visualization tools to enable policy-makers to leverage HEC data for policy formulation and for preparation of Action Plans for mitigation of conflicts.

SAVE THE TUSKERS

- > Project Elephant launched in 1992
- > The scheme is run by both the governments sharing the fund, where in the Centre takes care of **60%** and state takes into account **40%**
- > The scheme is applicable to **16 states** including Andhra Pradesh
- > India has **32 elephant** reserves
- > AP has only one reserve
- > AP has around **90 elephants**
- > North Andhra has **10 elephants** while Rayalaseema has **80 elephants**

With meagre funds from the government we can provide only drinking water at the RER. These reserve forests can be a boost to tourism too but before that, they need to be developed

Tammineni Chakrapani |
RAYALA ELEPHANT RESERVE

SC rules ‘Daughters have equal heirship rights in joint Hindu family property’

- Holding that daughters cannot be deprived of their right of equality, the Supreme Court Tuesday ruled that they will have equal coparcenary rights in joint Hindu family property even if the father died before the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005.



- The verdict makes it clear the amendment to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 granting equal rights to daughters to inherit ancestral property would have retrospective effect.

Coparcener is a term used for a person who assumes a legal right in parental property by birth only.

‘Sputnik V’

- Russia has named its first approved COVID-19 vaccine 'Sputnik V' for the foreign markets. It is a reference to the world's first satellite Sputnik and what Moscow sees as its success at becoming the first country to approve a vaccine, a top official said.
- The speed at which Russia is moving to roll out the vaccine has prompted some international scientists to question whether Moscow is putting national prestige before solid science and safety.



Indian-origin Kamala Harris nominated as US Vice President

- Democratic nominee Joe Biden has named Indian-origin senator Kamala Harris as his running mate, making history by selecting the first black woman to compete on a major party's presidential ticket.
- In choosing Harris, Biden is embracing a former rival from the Democratic primary who is familiar with the rigour of a national campaign.
- Harris, a 55-year-old first-term senator, is also one of the party's most prominent figures and quickly became a top contender for the No. 2 spot after her own White House campaign ended. She joins Biden in the 2020 race at a moment of unprecedented national crisis.

Supply Chain Resilience Initiative

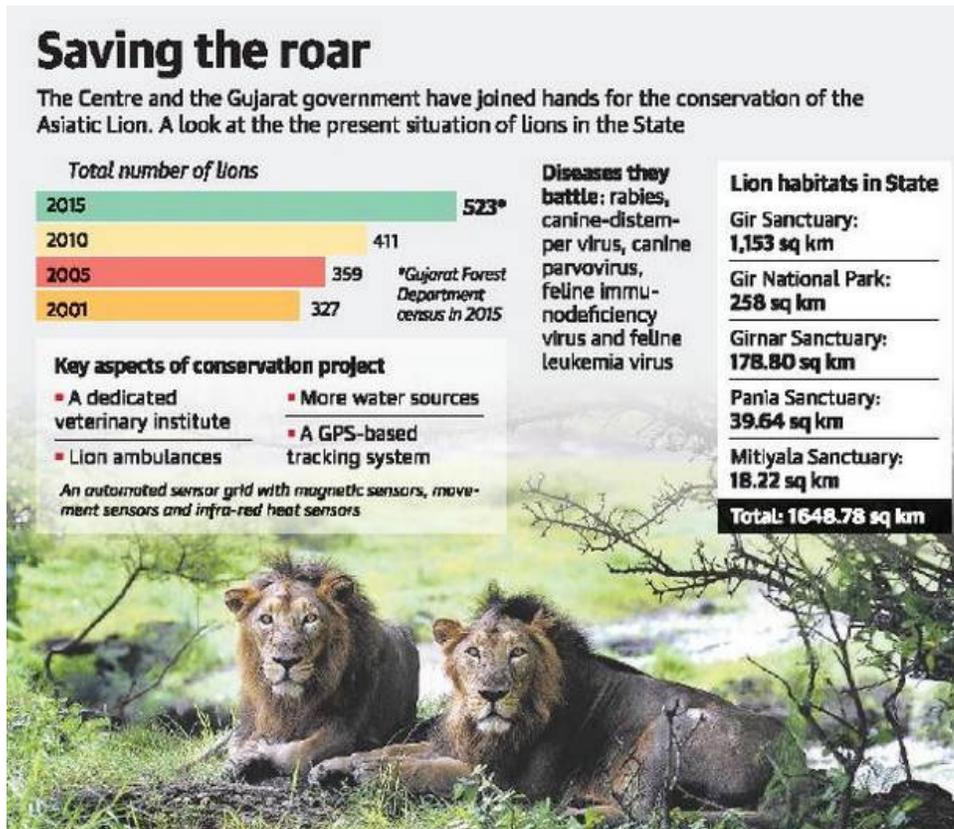
- Japan, India and Australia are seeking to build stronger supply chains to counter China's dominance as trade and geopolitical tensions escalate across the region by building a "supply chain resilience initiative.
- The intensifying U.S.-China conflict and worsening diplomatic relations across the region are forcing companies to consider whether they can continue to do business in China as before.

- In addition, the disruptions to trade caused by Covid-19 brought home how dependent many nations were on China for essential goods such as ventilators or masks, spurring talk about diversification.
- The new proposal will seek to lean on bilateral agreements between countries and put in place further measures for trade facilitation and attracting foreign direct investment in the Indo-Pacific region.

Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) is a direct response to the individual economies and companies who are concerned about the Chinese political behavior and disruption to the supply chain.

Project Lion & Project Dolphin

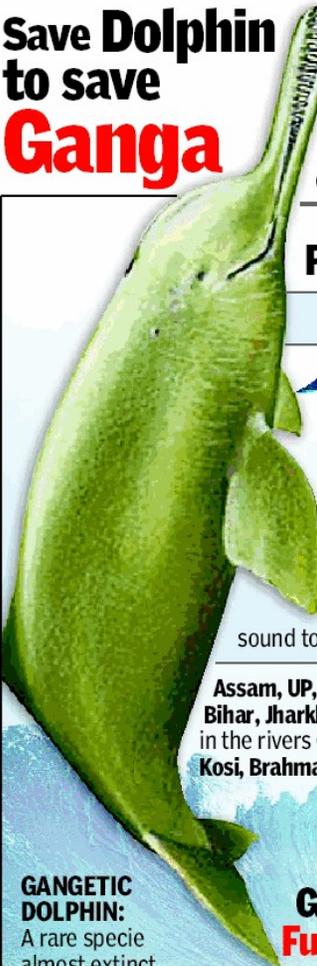
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during Independence Day celebrations announced the launch of Project Lion and Project Dolphin for the conservation of the two endangered species in the country using modern technology.
- Project Lion would involve conservation of the Asiatic Lion, and its landscape.
- The project will entail habitat development by engaging modern technologies in management and addressing the issue of diseases in lion and its associated species through advanced world-class research and veterinary care.



The Asiatic Lion Reintroduction Project is an initiative of the Indian Government to provide safeguards to the Asiatic lion from extinction in the wild by means of reintroduction. The last wild population of the Asiatic lion is found in the region of Gir Forest National Park, in the state of Gujarat.

- Meanwhile, Project Dolphin aims at the conservation and protection of the Dolphins in rivers and oceans of the country.
- It involves conservation of Dolphins and the aquatic habitat through the use of modern technology—especially in enumeration and anti-poaching activities.

Save Dolphin to save Ganga



The Centre has declared the dolphin a national aquatic animal to save the rare freshwater species from disappearing from the country's aqua map

Know about **Platanista gangetica**

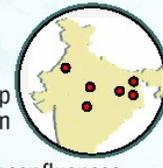
	1.67 m
Males grow up to 2.12 m	Females grow up to 2.67 m

Females give birth to only one calf, once in **2-3 yrs**

Generally blind, they catch their prey by emitting ultrasonic sound to gauge distance, mass etc

Assam, UP, MP, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand & W Bengal in the rivers **Chambal, Sone, Kosi, Brahmaputra**

Prefer deep waters, in & around Indian river confluences



GANGETIC DOLPHIN: A rare specie almost extinct

Lost cousin: The Yangtze dolphin, Baiji, of China

Grim Future | Dwindling number due to killing, habitat fragmentation

Once counted in 10's of 1000's, the amount has reduced in last century to **1,500**

"Endangered" & placed in **Schedule-I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**

In 2009, the Gangetic dolphins were declared India's National Aquatic animal during the first meeting of the erstwhile National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) and it is placed under the "endangered" category by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The Gangetic river dolphins can only live in freshwater, are blind and catch their prey in a unique manner, using ultrasonic sound waves.

India ranks first in Organic Farming

- The growth story of organic farming is unfolding with increasing demand not only in India but also globally. India ranks first in number of organic farmers and ninth in terms of area under organic farming.
- Sikkim became the first state to become fully organic and other states including Tripura and Uttarakhand have set similar targets.



- North East India has been traditionally following organic farming and the usage of chemicals in the region is reported to be far less than the rest of the country. The tribal and island territories are also being nurtured to continue their organic cultivation.

ILO-ADB Report on Indian Unemployment

- As many as 41 lakh youth in the country lost jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic while construction and farm sector workers account for the majority of job losses, according to a joint report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

- Youth (15-24 years) will be hit harder than adults (25 and older) in the immediate crisis and risk bearing higher longer-term economic and social costs.
- The report is based on regional assessment of the 'Global Survey on Youth and COVID-19' and arrived at estimates based on available unemployment data in different countries.
- It said that in India, two-thirds of firm-level apprenticeships and three quarters of internships were completely interrupted during the pandemic.

National Recruitment Agency

- Union Cabinet approved a proposal to set up National Recruitment Agency that will conduct a Common Eligibility Test (CET) for selection to non-gazetted posts in the central government and public sector banks.
- There will be single entrance examination for all non-gazetted posts — Group B and C posts. Candidates who qualify this Common Entrance Test (CET) can apply to any recruitment agencies for higher level of examination.
- The score will be valid for three years during which candidate can apply for jobs in different sectors depending upon his/her aptitude and preferences.
- Through the Common Eligibility Test, it will eliminate multiple tests and save precious time as well as resources.
- National Recruitment Agency will conduct a common eligibility test for Staff Selection Commission (SSC), the Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs) and the Institute of Banking Service Personnel (IBPS).

Single exam

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

- The NRA will initially conduct the CET for three sectors – Railway Recruitment Board, Staff Selection Commission and Institute of Banking Personnel Selection
- It will be held separately for three levels – graduate, 12th pass and 10th pass – for the non-technical posts of the three agencies
- Examination will be conducted online twice a year in 12 languages and will be based on a common curriculum



- Scores will be valid for a three-year period. Students can write the test multiple times and their best score will be taken into account
- According to the DoPT Secretary, there are 1.25 lakh vacancies every year in Group B and C for non-gazetted officers, and about 2.5 crore people apply every year for examinations to fill these vacancies

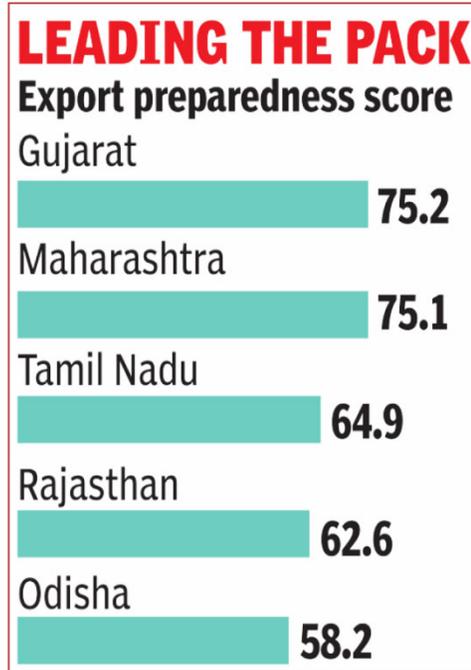
- Further, it would be open for other agencies in the public as well as private domain to adopt it if they so choose. Thus, in the long run, the CET score could be shared with other recruiting agencies in the Central Government, State Governments/Union Territories, Public Sector Undertaking and Private Sector. This would help such organizations in saving costs and time spent on recruitment.

UK’s ‘Eat Out to Help Out’ scheme

- The EOHO Scheme is an economic recovery measure by the UK government to support hospitality businesses as they reopen after the COVID-19 lockdown in the country.
- Under the EOHO Scheme, the government would subsidise meals (food and non-alcoholic drinks only) at restaurants by 50 per cent, from Monday to Wednesday every week, all through August.
- The discount is capped at GBP(British pound sterling) 10 per head and does not apply to take-away or event catering.
- There is no minimum spend and no limit on the number of times customers can avail the offer, since the whole point of the scheme is to encourage a return to dining in restaurants.
- EOHO scheme would cost GBP 500 million.
- All over the world, the food services sector is one of the worst affected by the pandemic.
- In the UK, the top two concerns were customers avoiding restaurants for fear of contracting the virus and customers having less disposable income for dining out.
- The scheme makes eating out more affordable for consumers directly and helps restore demand.
- And Restoring consumer demand is being seen as crucial to the UK’s economic recovery.

Export Preparedness Index 2020

- Recently, the NITI Aayog in partnership with the Institute of Competitiveness released the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) report 2020.
- Gujarat has topped the Niti Aayog’s Export Preparedness Index 2020 followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu in the second and third place respectively.
- According to the report, six coastal states -- Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Karnataka and Kerala -- feature in the top ten rankings, indicating the presence of strong enabling and facilitating factors to promote exports.
- The report stated that Chattisgarh and Jharkhand are two landlocked states that had initiated several measures to promote exports.



- The report noted that other states facing similar socio-economic challenges can look at the measures taken by Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand and try to implement them to grow their exports.

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

- NITI Aayog has launched the India Component of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)– Transport Initiative for Asia (TIA).
- It is a joint programme, supported by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).
- It aims to promote a comprehensive approach to decarbonize transport in India, Vietnam, and China.
- It is implemented by a consortium of seven other organisations.
- On behalf of the Government of India, NITI Aayog will be the implementing partner.
- The NDC-TIA programme has duration of 4 years.
- It will allow India and other partner countries to achieve accountable long-term targets by making a sectoral contribution through various interventions, coordinated with a large number of stakeholders in the domain.
- This will contribute towards achieving their NDCs and increasing their ambition in the transport sector of 2025 NDCs.
- India has a massive and diverse transport sector that caters to the needs of billion people.
- It has the world’s second-largest road network, which contributes to maximum greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through all means of transportation.
- With increasing urbanisation, the fleet size i.e. the number of sales of vehicles is increasing rapidly.
- It is projected that the total number of vehicles will be doubled by 2030.

UDAN 4.0

- 78 new routes under the 4th round of Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)- UdeDesh Ka AamNagrik (UDAN) have been approved following the three successful rounds of bidding by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- This will further enhance the connectivity to remote and regional areas of the country. The North Eastern Region, Hilly States and Islands have been given priority in the approval process for the new routes.
- So far, 766 routes have been sanctioned under the UDAN scheme. 29 served, 08 unserved (including 02 heliports and 01 water aerodrome), and 02 underserved airports have been included in the list for approved routes.
- Special boost is being given to connectivity in North East with routes from Guwahati to Tezu, Rupsi, Tezpur, Passighat, Misa and Shillong. People will be able to fly from Hissar to Chandigarh, Dehradun and Dharmshala under these UDAN 4 routes. Routes from Varanasi to Chitrakoot and Shravasti have also been approved. Agatti, Kavaratti and Minicoy islands of Lakshadweep have also been connected by the new routes of UDAN 4.0.

States can make sub categories in reserved categories

- A five-judge constitutional bench of Supreme Court ruled that the states can sub classify list of Scheduled Caste, Socially and Educationally Backward Classes and Scheduled Tribes to provide preferential treatment to those that are deprived within.
- The constitution bench comprising five SC judges observed that since in Indian federal structure the State Governments have the power to make reservations according to their demographic assessment, they also can sub-classify it.

