

West Bengal Current Affairs

October, 2019

1. The Union Government has constituted a committee of officers to suggest measures to augment –GST revenue.

Note: The panel comprises state-level GST commissioners of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar

Pradesh, West Bengal and Punjab besides central government officials including Principal Commissioner of GST and Joint Secretary (Revenue). The committee has been asked to suggest urgent measures to arrest the fall in tax revenues and suggest steps to be taken to improve revenue collection. The move came in the backdrop of a decrease in GST collections in September 2019.

2. The West Bengal Government has decided to invest Rs 540 Cr for infrastructural development of Calcutta Leather Complex (renamed as Karmadiganta) situated at Bantala, 24 Parganas District.

Note: The Karmadiganta complex is considered Asia's first integrated leather complex. The West Bengal Government is aiming to raise the target to Rs 30,000 Cr in the next five years.

3. Parichay' (identity): A Legal aid clinic

- Recently five law schools of the country have jointly launched a legal aid clinic called 'Parichay' (identity) to help people excluded from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) appeal before the foreigners' tribunals (FTs).
- These law schools are Assam's National Law University and Judicial Academy, West Bengal National University of Juridical Science, Hyderabad's National Academy of Legal Studies and Research, Delhi's National Law University and the National Law University of Odisha.
- The headquarters of Parichay is in Guwahati, Assam.
- Parichay will assist lawyers in drafting appeals, conduct research on pertinent questions of law, assist in training lawyers and paralegals and generate documentation on the functioning of FTs.
- "Parichay will also collaborate with civil society to provide legal aid to communities.

4. Ganga Amantran Abhiyan:

- Jal Shakti Ministry has launched the 'Ganga Amantran Abhiyan', a month-long exploratory open-water rafting and kayaking expedition, covering nearly 2,500 kilometres from Devprayag in Uttarakhand to Ganga Sagar in West Bengal.



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About

- This is the first-ever effort by the National Mission for Clean Ganga to raft across the entire stretch of the river.
- It is a nine-member team of swimmers and rafters from the three services of the Indian Armed Forces will be led by acclaimed international open-water swimmer Wing Commander Paramvir Singh.
- It is also the longest ever social campaign undertaken through an adventure sporting activity to spread the message of river rejuvenation and water conservation on a massive scale.
- The expedition will draw attention to the ecological challenges being faced by the Ganga.

5. Kanyashree University

West Bengal government has decided to set up Kanyashree University in Nadia district and Kanyashree colleges across the state so as to empower girls.

About Kanyashree scheme

- It was started by the West Bengal government to empower girls in 2013.
- The 'Kanyashree Prakalpa' seeks to improve the status and well being of girls, particularly those from socio economically disadvantaged families through conditional cash transfers. Objectives.
- To ensure that girls study in schools and delay their marriages until they attain 18 years of age.
- To empower girls from school to university level so that they can become independent women.
- To improve the status and well-being of girls, particularly those from socioeconomically disadvantaged families through conditional cash transfers.
- The scheme has two cash transfer components (a) An annual incentive of Rs 750 is given to girls in the age group 13 to 18 years old and studying in Class 8 for every year till they continue their education—provided they are unmarried at the time.
(b) A one-time grant of Rs 25,000 is also given to girls once they attain the age of 18 years, provided they are engaged in the academic or occupational pursuit and unmarried.
- In 2017, the Kanyashree scheme won the United Nations for Public Service award for its Kanyashree scheme.

6. Baul Festival

Recently a three day long Baul festival has concluded in Dhaka with performances by Bauls from India and Bangladesh.

About Baul

- They are the mystic minstrels living in rural Bangladesh and West Bengal.
- Baul music represents a particular type of folk song, carrying influences of Hindu bhakti movements as well as the shuphi, a form of Sufi song.
- Bauls belong to an unorthodox devotional tradition influenced by Hinduism, Buddhism, Bengali, Vaisnavism and Sufi Islam yet distinctly different from them.



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- In 2005, the Baul tradition of Bangladesh was included in the list of Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.
7. **India, Japan begins joint Air Force exercise 'Shinyuu Maitri'**
- The Indian Air Force will be carrying out a joint military exercise 'Shinyuu Maitri' with Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) from October 17 to 23.
 - The exercise will be held at Air Force Station, Arjan Singh in Panagarh town in West Bengal.
 - C-130 J aircraft of the Special Operations Squadron of IAF and C130 H of Tactical Airlift Squadron of JASDF will participate in the exercise.
 - The focus of the exercise will be to undertake Joint Mobility and Tactical interoperability among the two forces.
8. **Eastern Zonal Council:**
- The 11th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eastern Zonal Council was held at Patna.
 - The five Zonal Councils (Northern, Eastern, Northern, Southern and Central Zonal Councils) were set up under the State's Reorganization Act, 1956.
 - Eastern Zonal Council- Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim and West Bengal.
 - Union Home Minister is the Chairman of these councils.
 - The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as ViceChairman of the Zonal Council by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.
 - Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.
9. **Rajiva Sinha new chief secretary of West Bengal.** Rajiva Sinha, the additional chief secretary in the health and family welfare department, will take over as the chief secretary of Bengal on September 30 following the retirement of incumbent Malay De the same day. Sinha, a 1985 batch Indian Administrative Service(IAS) officer was named by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for the post.
10. **Mamata Banerjee presents Biswa Bangla Sharad Samman to 79 community Durga Pujas.** Addressing a function on the occasion at the State Secretariat today, Ms Banerjee said that Durga Puja festival helps in community development, building relations among people to people besides generating income.

Referring to the Durga Puja Carnival organized by the State Government, Ms Banerjee said that it has created a good impact among people within four years of its beginning. She said that UNESCO has agreed to recognize Durga Puja as World Cultural Heritage.



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