

PLI Schemes for drugs & medical devices

Why in the news?

- **Chemicals and Fertilizers Ministry** has recently **revised the Production Linked Incentive Schemes** for promoting **domestic manufacturing of bulk drugs and medical devices**.



More about the revised guidelines

- In the revised guidelines, the **minimum threshold investment requirement** has been replaced by **committed investment** considering **availability of technology choices** which varies from product to product.
- The change has been made to **encourage efficient use of productive capital**.

Change in eligibility Criteria

- There is also **change in the eligibility criteria of minimum sales** threshold in line with **projected demand, technology trend** and **market development**, for the **purpose of availing incentive** under the scheme.

Tenure

- The **tenure of the scheme** has been extended by one year keeping in view the **capital expenditure expected** to be **done by the selected applicants in FY 2021-22**.
- Accordingly, the **sales for the purpose of availing incentives** will be **accounted for 5 years** starting from **FY 2022-2023** instead of **FY 2021-2022**.

Background

- The **PLI schemes** were **approved by the Cabinet on March 20, 2020**, and **detailed guidelines for the implementation of the schemes** were issued by the **Department of Pharmaceuticals on July 27, 2020**.
- The Department of Pharmaceuticals earlier come out with the **two Production Linked Incentive schemes**:
 - a. **Production Linked Incentive scheme for promotion of domestic manufacturing of critical Key Starting Materials, Drug Intermediates and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients in India.**
 - b. **Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Promoting Domestic Manufacturing of Medical Devices.**
- After approval of Cabinet, **detailed guidelines for the implementation of the schemes** were issued by the **Department of Pharmaceuticals in July** this year.

Note:

- Globally, the **Indian pharmaceutical industry** is the **third largest in terms of volume** and **contributes significantly to India's economic growth** and **export earnings**.

Topic- GS-III–Health Sector

Source-PIB

Centre sets up commission to tackle NCR pollution

Why in the news?

- The **Centre** has recently constituted a “**permanent**” body – **Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas** after dissolving the **22-year-old Environmental Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority** that has so far addressed **air pollution in Delhi**.
- Encompassing **Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh**, the **all-powerful body** assumes several powers to **coordinate action among States**, levy fines - ranging **up to ₹1 crore or five years in prison** to address **air pollution**.



About the Commission

- The commission **awaits a formal perusal** by the **Supreme Court** before it can be **brought into effect**.

Members

- The panel will have at **least six permanent members** and will be **headed by a former or incumbent Secretary** to the **Central government**, or a **Chief Secretary to a State government**.
- It will have **members from Ministries** as well as **representatives from States**.

Where they get this power?

- The **Central Pollution Control Board** and its **State branches** have the powers to **implement provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act** for **air, water, and land pollution**.
- In case of **dispute or a clash of jurisdictions**, the commission's writ will prevail specific to **matters concerning air pollution**.

Rules enforcement

- The commission will be **empowered to constitute special investigative groups** for **stricter implementation**, but the letter of the **ordinance has no such details**.
- **EPCA** had almost similar powers but **failed miserably in cleaning the air** even after **being in force for more than 20 years**.

Related Information

Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority

- It was **constituted** with the **objective of protecting and improving the quality of the environment** and preventing and **controlling the environmental pollution** in the **National Capital Region**, under the provisions of the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- The **EPCA** is also mandated to enforce **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** in the city as per the **pollution levels**.
- The reason why **EPCA is an authority**, and not just an **advisory committee**, is because it has powers like those **enjoyed by the Centre**.

Powers

- The EPCA has been empowered to take **Suo motu action** as well as based on **complaints made by any individual, representative body or organization functioning** in the environmental issues sector.
- One of the EPCA's important powers is the **redressal of grievances through complaints.**

Reconstituted

- EPCA was **reconstituted with 20 members** after the expiry of its last tenure in **2018.**
- Members include **DG of TERI; CEO of Centre for Energy, Environment and Water; former professor of surgery, AIIMS.**

Other major Measures Taken by Government to tackle Air Pollution

Graded Response Action Plan

- The **action plan** has approved by the **Supreme Court in 2016** and **notified in 2017 for Delhi** and the **National Capital Region (NCR).**
- The plan was **formulated after several meetings** were held by **Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA)** with **state government representatives** and experts.
- **GRAP** includes the measures which will be taken by **different government agencies to prevent worsening of Air Quality of Delhi-NCR** and **prevent PM10 and PM2.5 levels** to go beyond the **'moderate' national Air Quality Index (AQI) category.**
- If air quality reaches the **'Severe+' stage**, the response under **GRAP includes extreme measures** such as **shutting down schools** and **implementing the odd-even road-space rationing scheme.**
- The plan **requires action and coordination** among **13 different agencies** in **Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan (NCR areas).**



Turbo Happy Seeder

- **Subsidies are provided** to the farmers for buying **Turbo Happy Seeder (THS)** which is a **machine mounted on a tractor** that cuts and **uproots the stubble**, to **reduce stubble burning.**

Introduction of BS-VI

- The **introduction of BS-VI vehicles** pushes for **electric vehicles (EVs), Odd-Even as an emergency measure** and **construction of the Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways** to reduce vehicular pollution.

Development of the National Air Quality Index

- It **provides the information** under the aegis of the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)**.
- **Air Quality Index (AQI)** has been **developed for eight pollutants** viz. **PM2.5, PM10, Ammonia, Lead, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, ozone, and carbon monoxide**

Topic- GS III–Environment

Source-The Hindu

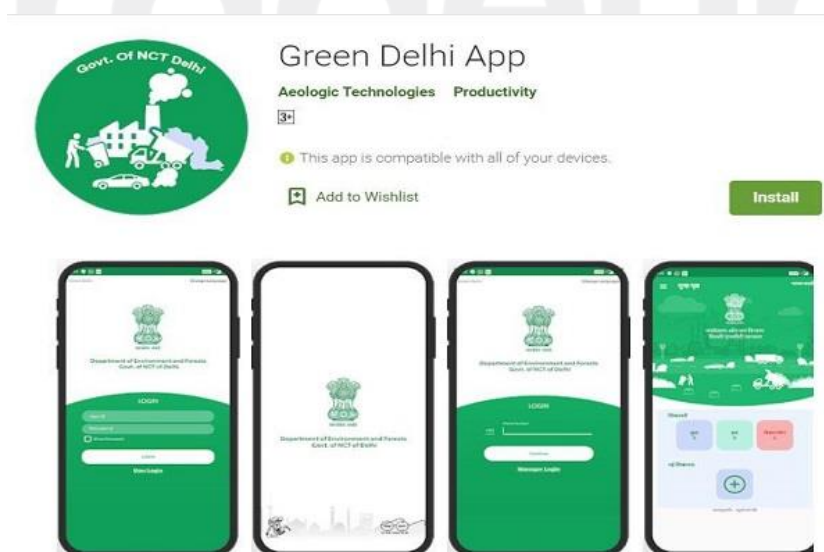
Green Delhi App

Why in the news?

- **Chief Minister of Delhi** has recently **launched an app** called **Green Delhi** which will **involve citizen participation** and **ensure timely action** in the government's **fight against pollution**.

About the Green Delhi App

- The **app enables citizens** to **register complaints**, report pollution sources and violations of anti-pollution norms.
- Citizens can take **photos, videos, and audio of local causes of pollution** such as **garbage burning, industrial pollution** and **construction dust** among others and upload on the app.
- **Green marshals** also deployed **“For the monitoring of the complaints.”**



Coordination of different Department

- Around **21 departments**, including **civic bodies, DDA, DJB, Delhi Police, DSIDC, Delhi government departments** are attached to the **app** and **every department** has a **nodal officer** along with a **senior officer** who is in charge of all the **complaints registered related to the department**.

Specified Timeline

- The **resolution of all the complaints** as per the timeline, especially a specified **timeline of 48 hours**.
- If the **complaints are not resolved within 48 hours**, they will coordinate with the **senior officials of the departments** and **work to resolve the complaints**.

**Gradeup UPSC Exams
Super Subscription**
(UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)

Access to All
Structured Courses
& Test Series

ENROL NOW

Topic- GS III–Environment
Source-The Hindu

SERB – POWER (Promoting Opportunities for Women in Exploratory Research)

Why in the news?

- **Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare** has launched a **Scheme** titled “**SERB-POWER (Promoting Opportunities for Women in Exploratory Research)**”, designed **exclusively for women scientists**.

About SERB – POWER Scheme

The Scheme will have two components namely

- SERB-POWER Fellowship
- SERB- POWER Research Grants.

Salient features of the SERB-POWER Fellowship:

- **Target:** Women researchers in **35-55 years of age**. Up-to **25 Fellowships per year** and not **more than 75** at any point in time.



- **Components of support:** Fellowship of **Rs. 15,000/- per month** in addition to regular income; Research **grant of Rs. 10 lakh per annum**; and **Overhead of Rs. 90,000/- per annum**.
- **Duration:** Three years, without the possibility of extension. Once in a career.

B. Salient features of the SERB – POWER Research Grants:

- POWER Grants will empower women researchers by funding them under following two categories:
 - **Level I** (Applicants from IITs, IISERs, IISc, NITs, Central Universities, and National Labs of Central Government Institutions)
 - The scale of funding is up to 60 lakhs for three years.
 - **Level II** (Applicants from State Universities / Colleges and Private Academic Institutions)
 - The scale of funding is up to 30 lakhs for three years.
- **POWER Grant** will be **regulated through terms of reference** conforming to **SERB-CRG** (Science and Engineering Research Board-Core Research Grant) guidelines.
- It is proposed to **institute 25 POWER Fellowships** annually.
- A **total of 50 Power Grants** each will be sanctioned in **Level I & Level II per annum**.

Significance

- These **Schemes of the Government** will **empower women scientists** and **cultivate women friendly culture** in our academic and **research institutions** and ensure more **women in leadership positions** in decision making bodies.

Related Information

Fund for Improvement of Science and Technology (FIST) Programme

- Recently, the **Department of Science and Technology** has called for restructuring its **Fund for Improvement of Science and Technology (FIST) Programme**.

About Fund for Improvement of Science and Technology (FIST) Programme

- The **FIST programme for Infrastructure in Universities and Higher Educational Institutions** aims to cater to **high-end requirements of startups** and industries and align it with the government's '**self-reliant India**' campaign.
- The **FIST programme** will now be **reinvented as FIST 2.0** to orient it towards **the goal of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'** to create **research and development infrastructure**.
- It supports scaling up of the **network of infrastructural facilities for teaching and research in universities and higher educational institutions**.
- FIST 2.0 will also link up programmes like FIST, **Sophisticated Analytical Instrument Facilities (SAIF)**, and **Sophisticated Analytical & Technical Help Institutes (SATHI)**, all of which are designed to set up **science and technology infrastructure centers** at department, university, regional and national level,

Topic- GS II–Women Empowerment and Education

Source-The Hindu

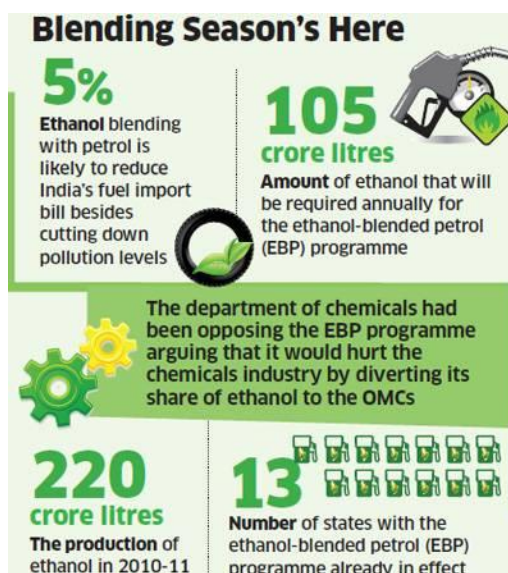
Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme

Why in the news?

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** has approved of **fixing higher ethanol price** derived from **different sugarcane based raw materials** under the **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme** for the forthcoming **sugar season 2020-21**.

About Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme

- It was **launched in January 2003** by the **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoP&NG)**.




- The programme has been **extended to whole of India** except **Union Territories of Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands** with effect from **01st April 2019**.

- It seeks to **achieve blending of Ethanol** with motor spirit with a **view to reducing pollution**, conserve **foreign exchange and increase value addition** in the **sugar industry enabling** them to **clear cane price arrears of farmers**.
- It seeks to **reduce import dependence** for **energy requirements** and **give boost to agriculture sector**.
- The **ethanol is procured by state-run oil marketing companies** under the **Centre's Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme** and the higher prices will **help the sugar industry pay their dues to sugarcane farmers**.

Aiming for an eco boost
Oil industry experts have allayed fears over mixing ethanol with petrol and say it cannot damage engines

- Ethanol is a bio-fuel obtained primarily from sugarcane. Blending of ethanol with petrol reduces dependence on fossil fuel and helps the environment
- The government had set a target of 10% of ethanol per litre of petrol
- Ethanol is blended through a separate pumping and metering mechanism
- Once blended, ethanol cannot be separated from petrol

Since ethanol can absorb moisture from the atmosphere, dealers say it can cause issues with vehicle engines



- The ethanol procured under the EBP programme are ethanol from
 - 1) Sugarcane juice/sugar/sugar syrup
 - 2) B heavy molasses
 - 3) C heavy molasses
 - 4) Damaged Food grains/other sources

Note:

- The Government has **10% blending target** for mixing **ethanol with petrol by 2022 & 20% blending target by 2030**.

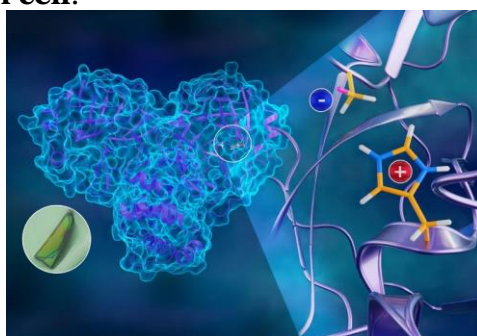
Topic- GS Paper III–Environment

Source-The Hindu

Scientists create 3D atomic map of novel coronavirus replication mechanism

Why in the news?

- Recently for the **first time**, scientists have **completed a 3D map** that reveals the **location of every atom** in the molecule of the **coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 enzyme** which is also called the **main Protease** which drives its replication once it **infects the human cell**.



About SARS-CoV-2 enzyme

- The **SARS-CoV-2 enzyme** expresses **long chains of proteins**.
- When these **chains are broken down and cut into smaller strands**, it **enables the virus to reproduce**.
- This task is performed by the **main protease**.
- Its **structure consists of two identical protein molecules** held together by **hydrogen bonds**.
- If a **drug can be developed that inhibits or blocks the protease activity**, it will **prevent the virus from replicating and spreading** to other cells in the body.
- Researchers used a **technique called neutron crystallography**.
- The **site containing the amino acids** where the **protein chains are cut**, these experiments revealed, is in an **electrically charged reactive state** – not in a **resting or neutral state**, contrary to previously held beliefs.

Significance of the research

- It is the **first time anyone** has **obtained a neutron structure** of a **coronavirus protein**.
- The researchers said it is also the **first time anyone has looked** at this class of **protease enzymes using neutrons**.
- Further, the **fact that the protein chains are cut at a site** that is in an **electrically charged reactive state**, rather than neutral, was a **surprise finding**.

Topic- GS Paper III–Science and technology

Source-the Hindu

Secure Application for Internet (SAI)

Why in the news?

- Recently the Indian Army has launched a messaging app called **SAI (Secure Application for Internet)** that will provide secure voice, text and video calling services to its soldiers.



About the Secure Application for Internet

- It is like **commercially available** messaging **applications like WhatsApp, Telegram, SAMVAD and GIMS**.
- It also **utilizes end-to-end encryption** messaging protocol.
- **SAI scores** over on **security features** with **local in-house servers** and coding which can be **tweaked as per requirements**.
- **SAI will be utilised pan Army** to facilitate **secure messaging** within the service.
- The **application has been vetted by CERT-in** empaneled auditor and the **Army Cyber Group**.

Topic- GS Paper II–Governance

Source-PIB

**Gradeup UPSC Exams
Super Subscription**
(UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)

Access to All
Structured Courses
& Test Series

ENROL NOW

J&K govt declares actions under Roshni Act 'null and void'

Why in the news?

- The **Jammu and Kashmir government** has declared the actions taken under the **Jammu and Kashmir State Land (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001** or '**Roshni Act**', as **null and void**.

Reason behind this move

- The Act, which was **repealed in 2018** by then **lieutenant governor Satya Pal Malik**, was implemented with the **aim of boosting the farming sector** and **"generating substantial revenue"** for **funding power projects**.
- However, the government stated that the Act had **"failed to realise the desired objectives and there were also reports of misuse of some its provisions"** due to **allegations of corruption** and an **alleged failure to deliver** the benefits it had been envisaged for.

What is the Roshni Act?

- The **land-related law**, popularly known as the **Roshni Act**, was brought into force by the **Farooq Adbullah government in 2001**.
- The law **aimed to grant ownership rights of public land** to occupants.
- Reportedly, **15.85 percent** of the **occupied land** was **approved for transfer of ownership rights**.
- The Act also sought the **conferment of proprietary rights** of around **20.55 lakh kanals of land** (1, 2, 50 hectares) to the **occupants**.
- Additionally, **legislators hoped the Act would help generate resources to finance power projects**.
- Farmers who had been **occupying State land** were also given **ownership rights for agricultural use**.
- The law **initially set 1990** as the **cut-off year for encroachment on State land**, based on which **ownership would be granted**.
- Subsequent governments under **Mufti Mohammad Sayeed** and **Ghulam Nabi Azad** relaxed the **deadline first to 2004** and then to 2007.

Topic- GS Paper II–Governance

Source-PIB

Pakistan grants provincial status to Gilgit-Baltistan

Why in the news?

- Recently the **Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan** has granted the **provincial status to Gilgit-Baltistan**.
- The move comes **after Saudi Arabia removed Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan** from the country's map.
- It will become the **5th province of Pakistan**.
- Currently, **Pakistan** has four provinces **namely Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh**.

India's reaction

- **India** has **clearly conveyed to Pakistan** that the **entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh**, including the area of so-called '**Gilgit-Baltistan**', are an **integral part of India** by virtue of the **legal, complete and irrevocable accession** of **Jammu and Kashmir** to the **Union of India** in **1947**.
- **Gilgit-Baltistan** had limited autonomy and **was ruled by the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order of 2009**.
- It is also a part of **China Pakistan Economic Corridor**.



Related Information

China Pakistan Economic Corridor

- It is the **flagship project** of China's ambitious **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
- The **bilateral project** between **Pakistan and China** intends to **promote connectivity** across **Pakistan** with a **network of highways**, railways, and pipelines accompanied by **energy, industrial and other infrastructure development projects**.
- It links the **Western part of China (Xinjiang)** to the **Gwadar Port** in **Balochistan, Pakistan** via **Khunjerab Pass** in **Northern Pakistan**.
- **India** has **protested** to **China** over the **CPEC** as it is being laid **through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir**.



About Gilgit-Baltistan

- Currently it is a **part of the Pakistani-administered sector** of the **Kashmir region**, in the **northern Indian subcontinent**.
- It is **situated in the Karakoram Range** in a **narrow valley on the Gilgit River** at its **confluence with the Hunza River** and **upstream from its confluence with the Indus River**.

Topic- GS Paper II–International Relation
Source-PIB

Rural Development Fund

Why in the news?

- The **Union government's decision to withhold rural development fee from Punjab**, and letters asking the **Punjab Government** to explain its **utilisation of the Rural Development Fund (RDF)** that it gets largely from the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** has enraged the **state government**.

Related Information

About Rural Development Fund

- It is the **3 per cent cess levied on the purchase or sale of agricultural produce** under the **Rural Development Fund Act, 1987** which is executed by **Punjab Rural Development Board (PRDB)** with the **Chief Minister as its chairman**.



What is Rural Development Board (RDB)?

- The **RDB was incorporated in April 1987** under **Rural Development Act, 1987** and is **mandated with the promotion of better agriculture and granting relief for the loss and damage to agricultural produce**.
- It also **provides the facility of streets lights, dharamshalas, panchayat ghars, canals and drains, government health infrastructure**, drinking water, sanitation, and government educational institutions in rural areas.
- This **fund is supposed to be used for the creation and maintenance of rural infrastructure** in and **outside mandis**.
- But there have been **charges in the past** that it was **diverted by the state for other purposes**.

Why has the central government suspended this fund?

- The **central government**, in a letter from the **Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**, has observed that the **fund is being diverted**, and has **asked the state government to explain** how it is **utilising this money**.
- It has also not **made any provision** for this fund in the **cost sheet** that it has **sent to the state**.

Topic- GS Paper II–Governance
Source-PIB

Bulk drug park

Why in the news?

- Recently **Himachal Pradesh** is one of the states vying for the allotment of a **bulk drug park** under a **central government scheme** announced earlier this year for setting up **three such parks across the country**.

What are bulk drugs or APIs?

- A **bulk drug**, also called an **active pharmaceutical ingredient (API)**, is the **key ingredient of a drug or medicine**, which lends it the **desired therapeutic effect or produces the intended pharmacological activity**.
- For example, **paracetamol is a bulk drug**, which **acts against pain**.



- It is **mixed with binding agents** or solvents to prepare the finished **pharmaceutical product**, i.e. a **paracetamol tablet, capsule, or syrup**, which is consumed by the patient.

What are key starting material and drug intermediates?

- APIs are prepared from multiple reactions involving **chemicals and solvents**.
- The **primary chemical or the basic raw material** which undergoes **reactions to form an API** is called the **key starting material, or KSM**.
- **Chemical compounds** formed during the **intermediate stages** during these reactions are called **drug intermediates or DIs**.

Factors responsible for promoting bulk drug parks

- **India** has one of the **largest pharmaceutical industries in the world** (third largest by volume), but this **industry largely** depends on other countries, particularly **China**, for **importing APIs, DIs and KSMs**.
- This year, **drug manufacturers in India** suffered repeated setbacks due to **disruption in imports**.
- In **January**, **factories in China** shut down when the country went into a **lockdown**, and later, **international supply chains** were affected as the **Covid pandemic** gripped the entire world.
- The **border conflict** between **India and China** exacerbated the situation.
- All these **factors pushed the Indian government** to **call for greater self-reliance across all industries**, and in **June**, the **department of pharmaceuticals** announced a **scheme for the promotion of three bulk drug parks** in the country.

Topic- GS Paper II–health

Source-Indian Express

Operation Muskaan

Why in the news?

- Recently, a **total of 485 children**, including **child labourers, abandoned ones and runaway kids**, were **rescued by the city and the district police**, during the two-day ‘Operation Muskaan’.

About Operation Muskaan

- It is an **initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.

Objective

- Its objective is to **rescue/rehabilitate missing children**.
- It is a **dedicated campaign for a month where several activities** are taken up by the **State Police personnel to trace and rescue the missing children and reunite them** with their families.

Background

- The “**Operation MUSKAAN-III**” was taken up **during July 2017** throughout the country as a **follow up of the earlier campaigns to rescue/rehabilitate the missing children**.

The objectives of the ‘Operation Muskaan’ are:

- **Rescue and Rehabilitation** of the missing children.
- Integrating the activities with **Child protection activities in the state**.
- **Capacity building of district level SJPU** to tackle the issue of missing children; and
- **Develop greater co-ordination of Social Welfare** department functionaries, **CWCs, SJPU, NGOs and community organizations** at district level as part of the **Integrated Child Protection Scheme** operational throughout the country.

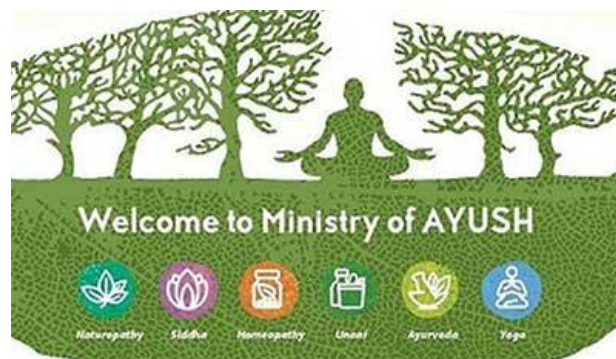
Topic- GS Paper II–Governance

Source-The Hindu

Strategic Policy & Facilitation Bureau (SPFB)

Why in the news?

- **Ministry of AYUSH and Invest India** will form a collaboration to set up a strategic policy unit called “**Strategic Policy & Facilitation Bureau (SPFB)**” to **facilitate planned and systematic growth of the Ayush Sector**.



About Strategic Policy & Facilitation Bureau (SPFB)

Aim

- To facilitate planned and systematic growth of the **Ayush sector**, **ministry of Ayush (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy)** plans to set up a **strategic policy unit** that will help it reach its **full potential and stimulate growth and investment**.

The activities to be undertaken by the SPFB would include:

- Knowledge Creation and Management,

- Strategic & Policy-Making Support,
- State Policy Bench marking: Undertaking State Policy bench marking to formulate uniform guidelines/regulations regarding AYUSH sector in India,
- Investment Facilitation: Follow up and facilitation of investment cases and MoUs, and coordination among different Department, organisations and States.
- Issue Resolution: Invest India would work with companies and other institutions on issue resolution across States and among various sub-sectors.

Role of AYUSH Ministry

- The Ministry of AYUSH would **assist the Bureau in responding to investment proposal**, issue and queries and **fund Invest India** for **undertaking activities assigned**.
- The Ministry will also **support the Bureau in building links** with various **stakeholders** such as **industry associations, affiliate bodies of Ministry and Industry representation**.

About Invest India

- It was **set up in 2009** as a **non-profit venture** under the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce, and Industry**.
- It is the **National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of India** and acts as the **first point of reference** for **investors in India**.

Topic- GS Paper III–Health

Source-PIB

New wage code bars bonus for those facing sex abuse charges

Why in the news?

- The **government is currently framing new Wages Code rules** for those indulging in **sexual harassment of any form** could run the **risk of losing out on bonus dues** from their employers.
- The **new Wages Code** is expected to **become operational** once the **government notifies the rules**.



Provisions against sexual harassment in the new wage code

- The **code says that an employee shall be disqualified from receiving bonus** if he is **dismissed from service for fraud or riotous or violent behaviour** while on the **premises of the establishment or theft, misappropriation or sabotage of any property** of the **establishment or conviction for sexual harassment**.

What does the current law provide?

- The **current law** says that **only reasons for which bonus dues** can be barred are for **fraud, violent behaviour, theft, misappropriation or sabotage and violent conduct**.

Significance

- This will **make employees more careful** of their **conduct and serves** as an **additional deterrent** apart from the **Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) law of 2013**.

Related Information

About Code on wages, 2019

- It has **amended and consolidated four labour laws** relating to **wages, bonus and related matters** which includes:
 - Payment of Wages Act, 1936
 - Minimum Wages Act, 1948
 - Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 and
 - Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- It **provides for all essential elements** related to **wages, equal remuneration, its timely payment, and bonus**.
- The **minimum wage** would include **basic rate of wage, cost of living allowance** and the **cash value of concessions** etc. and consider skills, arduousness of work, **geographical locations**, and other **aspects to fix it**.
- Both the **central and state governments** will **fix minimum wages** in their **respective sphere**.
- The provision **relating to timely payment** and **authorized deductions** (applicable until now for employees drawing Rs 24,000 per month) will be applicable to **"all employees irrespective of wage ceiling"**, including those in the **government establishments**.
- A **National Floor Level Minimum Wage** will be set by the **Centre and will be revised every five years**, while **states will fix minimum wages** for their regions, which cannot be **lower than the floor wage**.

About Sexual Harassment (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) at the workplace, 2013

- It widens the definition of **'aggrieved woman'** to include **all women, irrespective of age and employment status**, and it covers clients, customers, and domestic workers.
- It expands **'workplace'** beyond **traditional offices** to include all kinds of organizations across sectors, even **non-traditional workplaces** (for example those that involve telecommuting) and places **visited by employees for work**.
- It mandates the constitution of the **Internal Complaint Committee (ICC)** in case of more than 10 workers — and states the action to be taken if an **ICC is not formed** — and the **filing of an audit report** of the **number of complaints** and action taken at the end of the year.
- In case the **number of workers is less than 10**, it **mandates the constitution** of the **Local complaints committee**.
- It **lists the duties of the employer**, like **organizing regular workshops and awareness programmes** to educate employees about the Act.
- If the **employer fails to constitute an ICC**, or does not abide by any other provision, they **must pay a fine of up to ₹50,000**.
- If the **offender is a repeat offender**, the **fine gets doubled**.
- The **second offence** can also lead to **cancellation or non-renewal of his licence**.

Topic- GS Paper II—Women Empowerment

Source-The Hindu

Mission Sagar - II

Why in the news?

- Recently **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Airavat** entered **Port Sudan** with **100 tonnes of food aid** as a part of **Mission Sagar-II**.



About Mission Sagar-II

- It follows the first 'Mission Sagar' undertaken in **May-June 2020**, wherein **India reached out to Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, and Comoros**, and provided food aid and medicines.
- Under **Mission Sagar-II**, **Indian Naval Ship Airavat** will deliver food aid to **Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti, and Eritrea**.
- Mission Sagar-II is in line with the **Prime Minister's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region 'SAGAR'** and highlights the **importance accorded by India to relations with her maritime neighbours and further strengthens the existing bond**.

Related Information

Mission SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)

- It is a term coined by **Prime Minister Modi in 2015** during his **Mauritius visit with a focus on the blue economy**.
- It is a **maritime initiative** which gives **priority to the Indian Ocean region** for ensuring **peace, stability, and prosperity of India** in the **Indian Ocean region**.
- The **goal is to seek a climate of trust and transparency**; respect for **international maritime rules and norms by all countries**; sensitivity to each other's interests; **peaceful resolution of maritime issues**; and **increase in maritime cooperation**.
- It is in line with the principles of the **Indian Ocean Rim Association**.

Topic- GS Paper II–International Relation

Source-Indian Express

24th edition of the MALABAR naval exercise

Why in the news?

- The **24th edition of the MALABAR naval exercise** is scheduled in **two phases in November 2020**.
- **Phase 1 of the Exercise MALABAR 20** involving **participation by Indian Navy (IN), United States Navy (USN), Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF), and Royal Australian Navy (RAN)** is set to commence off **Visakhapatnam in Bay of Bengal**.
- **Phase 2 of MALABAR 20** is scheduled to be conducted in the **Arabian Sea in mid-November 2020**.



Related Information

About MALABAR naval exercise

- It is a **trilateral Maritime Exercise MALABAR** is scheduled between the navies of **India, Japan, and the USA**.
- **MALABAR series of maritime exercises** commenced in **1992** as a **bilateral IN-USN exercise**.
- It **got permanently expanded** into a **trilateral format** with the **inclusion of Japan in 2015**.

Note:

- **India and Japan defence forces** organize a **series of bilateral exercises** namely, **JIMEX, SHINYUU Maitri, and Dharma Guardian**.
- **India and USA** conduct **Joint Military Exercises** namely, **Yudha Abhyas**.

Topic- GS Paper III–Defence

Source-PIB

Asteroid 16 Psyche

Why in the news?

- Recently in a **study has found that asteroid 16 Psyche**, which orbits between **Mars and Jupiter**, could be made **entirely of metal and is worth an estimated \$10,000 quadrillion** – more than the **entire economy of Earth**.
- The **exact composition and origins of the asteroid** will be **uncovered in 2022**, when **NASA sends an unmanned spacecraft** to study it up close.



What is asteroid 16 Psyche?

- It is **located around 370 million kilometres** away from Earth.
- It is one of the **most massive objects** in the **asteroid belt** in our solar system.
- It was first discovered on **March 17, 1853**, by the **Italian astronomer Annibale de Gasparis** and was named after the **ancient Greek goddess of the soul, Psyche**.

- Unlike most **asteroids that are made up of rocks or ice**, scientists believe that **Psyche is a dense and largely metallic object** thought to be the **core of an earlier planet** that failed in formation.

Is the asteroid worth \$10,000 quadrillion?

- **NASA scientists** believe that the **asteroid is made up of almost entirely of iron, nickel** and several other **rare materials like gold, platinum, cobalt, iridium, and rhenium**.
- Hypothetically, if it were to be **transported to Earth**, **NASA Psyche mission's lead scientist Lindy Elkins-Tanton** has calculated that the **iron alone** would be worth **more than \$10,000 quadrillion**.

About NASA's Psyche mission

- **NASA plans** to launch a **SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket** from **Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida** to study Psyche.
- The **unmanned spacecraft** will reach the **asteroid in January 2026**.
- The **first objective of the mission** is to **capture a photograph** of the **metallic asteroid**, after which the **spacecraft will study and map** it from a distance.
- Another **objective of the mission** is to determine whether the asteroid is, in fact, the **core of an earlier planet** or if it is **merely made up of unmelted material**.
- The mission was originally slated to take place in **2023** but was later **moved up to 2022**.

Topic- GS Paper III–Science and Technology

Source-The Hindu

D614G mutation in coronavirus

Why in the news?

- According to a study, **one mutation called D614G** has become the **dominant variant** in the global COVID-19 pandemic.

What is Mutation?

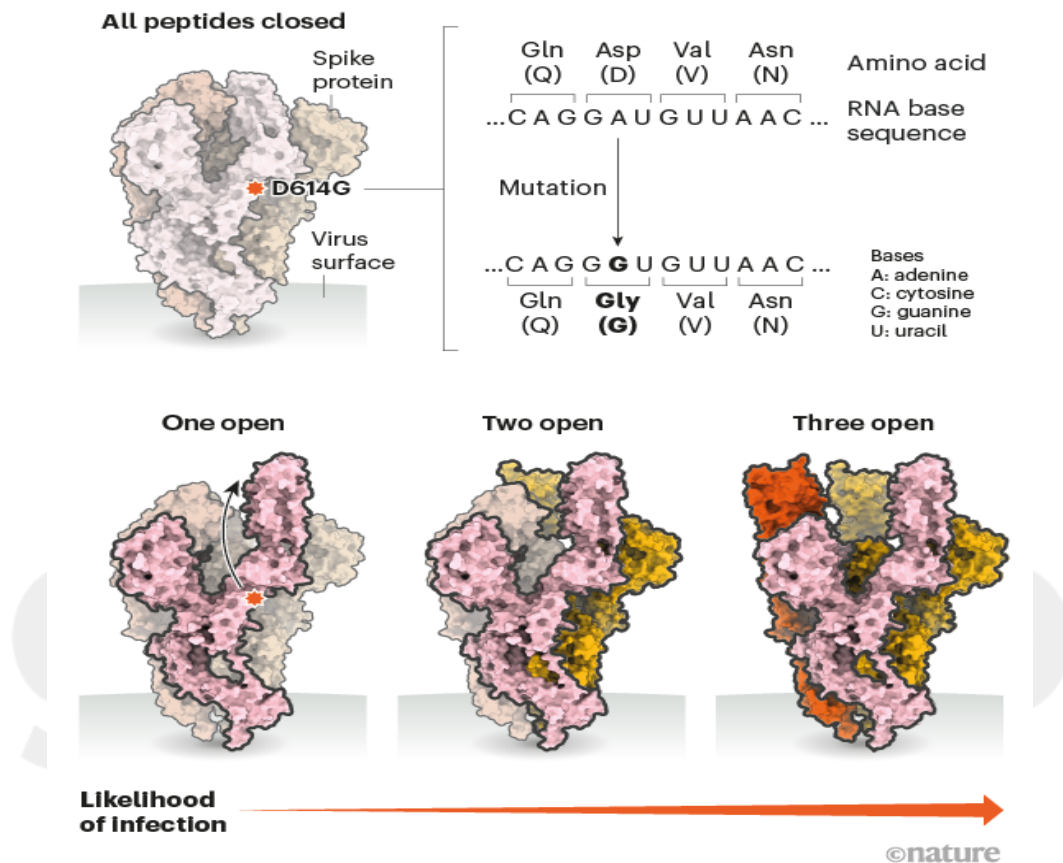
- Mutation is a **process when the virus enters an individual's body** as it **aims at creating copies of itself** and makes an **error in this copying process**.

About D614G Mutation

- Under **D614G mutation**, the **virus replaced the aspartic acid (D)** in the **614th position** of the **amino acid with glycine (G)**.
- The **mutated form of the virus** was **first identified in China** and then in **Europe**.
- The **D614G mutation** is situated in the **spike protein of the virus**.
- It is **present in the sub-unit S1** of the **protein** and is also close to the **S2 sub-unit**.
- The **D614G mutation**, which is the **defining mutation for clade A2** of the **virus**, is **prevalent in India**.

THE MUTATION THAT LOOSENS THE SPIKE PROTEIN

Spike proteins on SARS-CoV-2 bind to receptors on human cells, helping the virus to enter. A spike protein is made up of three smaller peptides in 'open' or 'closed' orientations; when more are open, it's easier for the protein to bind. The D614G mutation — the result of a single-letter change to the viral RNA code — seems to relax connections between peptides. This makes open conformations more likely and might increase the chance of infection.



Topic- GS Paper III–Science and Technology

Source-The Hindu

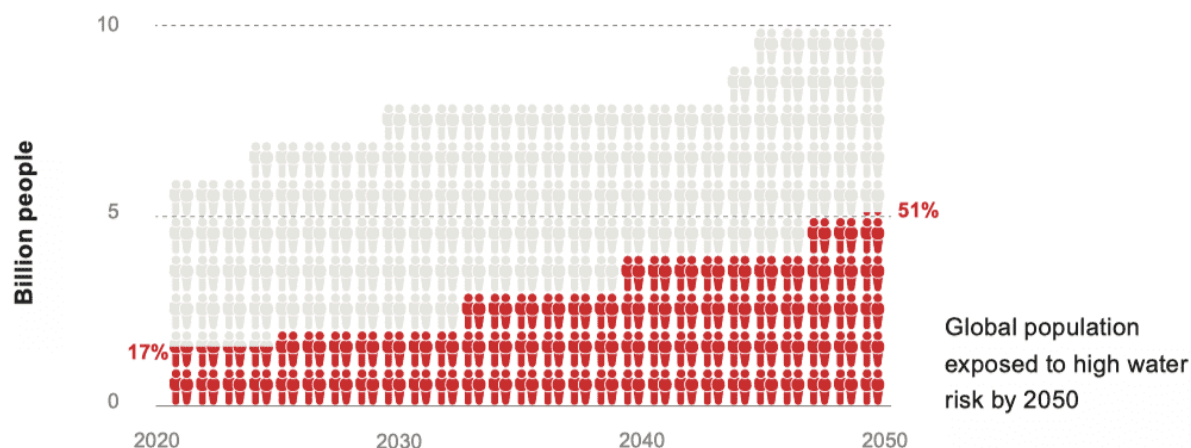
Water Risk Filter analysis report 2020

Why in the news?

- Recently **World Wildlife Fund (WWF)** has released the **Water Risk Filter analysis report 2020**.

About Water Risk Filter

- It is an **online tool co-developed by the WWF** that helps evaluate the **severity of risk places** faced by graphically **illustrating various factors** that **can contribute to water risk**.



Highlights of the report

- According to the **scenarios in the WWF Water Risk Filter**, the **100 cities** that are **expected to suffer the greatest rise in water risk by 2050** are home to **at least 350 million people** as well as **nationally and globally important economies**.
- Globally, **populations in areas of high-water risk could rise from 17% in 2020 to 51% by 2050**.
- The global list includes **cities such as Beijing, Jakarta, Johannesburg, Istanbul, Hong Kong, Mecca, and Rio de Janeiro**. China accounts for almost half the cities.

India and Report

- According to the report, **India has 30 cities** in the list.
- **Jaipur** topped the **list of Indian cities (45th)** followed by **Indore (75th)** and **Thane**.
- **Mumbai, Kolkata, and Delhi** also featured on the list.

Reasons

- This comes as **cities across India face shortage of water** due to **rapid urbanization, climate change, and lack of appropriate infrastructure** which continues to put **stress on the existing infrastructure**.

Recommendations to tackle the water crises

- **Multi-stakeholder engagement and ownership involving local communities** could be the key in **creating and conserving sustainable water infrastructure and rejuvenating urban freshwater systems**.
- **Urban planning and wetland conservation** need to be integrated to **ensure zero loss of freshwater** systems in urban areas.
- The **improving urban water infrastructure and cutting water consumption** will help **reduce water risks**.
- The **nature-based solutions** including **restoring degraded watersheds, reconnecting rivers to their floodplains, and restoring or creating urban wetlands** are critical.

Related Information

About World Wildlife Fund

- It is an **international non-governmental organization** founded in 1961 to **stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment** and to build a future in which **humans live in harmony with nature**.

- It is headquarters at **Gland, Switzerland.**

Topic- GS Paper III–Environment

Source-The Hindu

UNESCO includes Panna in the “World network of Biosphere Reserves”

Why in the news?

- **UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme** have recently included **Panna Biosphere Reserve** to UNESCO’s **World Network of Biosphere Reserves.**



About Panna Biosphere Reserve

- It is in the state of **Madhya Pradesh.**
- This the **12th biosphere reserve from India** to be included in the ‘**World Network of Biosphere Reserves**’, and third from **Madhya Pradesh**, after **Pachmarhi and Amarkantak.**
- It is a **critical tiger habitat area** and **hosts the Panna Tiger Reserve**, as well as the **World Heritage site of the Khajuraho Group of Monuments.**

About MAB programme

- It is an **intergovernmental scientific programme** launched in **1971** by **UNESCO.**
- It aims to **establish a scientific basis** for **enhancing the relationship** between **people and their environments.**
- It combines the **natural and social sciences** with a view to **improving human livelihoods and safeguarding natural and managed ecosystems**, thus **promoting innovative approaches to economic development** that are **socially and culturally appropriate** and **environmentally sustainable.**
- Under the programme, **UNESCO has established the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).**
- Biosphere reserves are **nominated by national governments.**
- If selected by UNESCO, they are **included in the WNBR.**
- The **World Network of Biosphere Reserves** currently counts **701 sites in 124 countries** all over the **world**, including **21 transboundary sites.**

India and MAB

- There are **12 biosphere reserves of India** which have been recognized internationally under **Man and Biosphere (MAB) Reserve program.**

These are:

- Nilgiri (First to be included)
- Gulf of Mannar
- Sunderban
- Nanda DeviNokrek
- Pachmarhi
- Similipal

- Achanakmar – Amarkantak
- Great Nicobar
- Agasthyamala
- Khangchendzonga (2018)
- Panna (2020).

Topic- GS Paper III–Environment

Source-The Hindu

Chhattisgarh launches scheme for distribution of fortified rice

Why in the news?

- **Chhattisgarh Chief Minister** has launched a **scheme for distribution of fortified rice** through **Public distribution System (PDS)** and other **welfare initiatives** for the **people of Kondagaon district of the State** on a pilot basis.



WHAT IS FORTIFIED RICE?

Fortification is the practice of deliberately increasing the content of an essential micronutrient, i.e. vitamins and minerals (including trace elements) in food to improve its nutritional quality and provide a public health benefit with minimal risk to health

- The fortification factor does not last for more than **45 days**, so it isn't advisable to store fortified rice for long
- According to National Family Health Survey, **78.7%** children and **75%** in the district are anaemic and suffer from malnutrition
- In the first phase, fortified rice will be distributed in Badangi, Bobbili, Ramabhadrapuram and Terlam mandals

About Fortification of Rice and its Distribution under Public Distribution System (PDS)

- The **Department of Food and Public Distribution** has approved the “**Centrally Sponsored Pilot Scheme on fortification of rice and its distribution through Public Distribution System.**”
- The **scheme was approved in February 2019** and allocated a **total budget outlay of ₹174.6 crore** for a **three-year period from 2019-20.**

Financial Assistance

- The **Scheme is funded by Government of India** in the **ratio of 90:10** in respect of **North Eastern, Hilly and Island States** and **75:25** in respect of the rest of the States.
- Further, the **Govt. has also advised all states and UTs** especially those states and UTs that are **distributing wheat flour through PDS** to distribute **fortified wheat flour through PDS.**
- The **Pilot Scheme** focuses on **15 districts, preferably 1 district per State.**
- So far, 15 States, i.e., **Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh** have consented for **implementation of the Pilot Scheme.**
- Out of these **States, Maharashtra and Gujarat** have already started distribution of **fortified rice under PDS** in the **Pilot Scheme from February 2020.**

Lag in implementation

- The **existing pilot scheme** to **distribute fortified rice** through the **Public Distribution System** in **15 districts** has only been **implemented in five districts so far**, although more than half the **project duration is over**.
- These **five States** are **Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Chhattisgarh**.
- The **remaining 10 States** have only **now identified their respective districts**, and will soon start distribution, but less than **one-and-a-half years** remain in the **scheme period**.

Related Information

Fortification in India

- **Fortification** refers to a **process of increasing** the content of an **essential micronutrient**, such as **vitamins or minerals**, in a food item to **improve its nutritional value** and **provide public health benefits** at minimal cost.
- **Rice is the fifth food item** that the **government is promoting with fortification** with salt, edible oil, milk, and wheat being the others.
- **Food Fortification** is a **scientifically proven, cost-effective, scalable, and sustainable global intervention** that addresses the **issue of micronutrient deficiencies**.
- In **October 2016**, **FSSAI** operationalized the **Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016** for **fortifying staples** namely:
 - Milk and Edible Oil (with Vitamins A and D)
 - Double Fortified Salt (with Iodine and Iron)
 - Wheat Flour and Rice (with Iron, Vitamin B12 and Folic Acid)
- The **World Health Organization** also recommends **fortification of rice with iron, vitamins, and folic acid** as a **public health strategy** to improve the **iron levels of populations**.

How is Rice fortified?

- **Rice can be fortified by adding a micronutrient powder** to the rice that **adheres to the grains or spraying of the surface of ordinary rice grains** with a **vitamin and mineral mix** to form a **protective coating**.
- Rice can also be **extruded and shaped** into partially **precooked grain-like structures resembling rice grains**, which can then be **blended with natural polished rice**.
- **Rice kernels** can be **fortified with several micronutrients**, such as **iron, folic acid and other B-complex vitamins, vitamin A and zinc**.

About Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC)

- The **FFRC is established under India's government department** that **regulates food i.e. FSSAI** in collaboration with **TATA Trusts**.
- The **FFRC works dedicatedly to provide essential support** to stakeholders like **relevant government ministries, food businesses, development partners** etc., promoting and supporting **food fortification efforts across India**.

Note:

- **India ranked 94 among 107 countries** in the **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020**.

Topic- GS Paper III–Health Issue

Source-The Hindu

iGOT e-learning Platform

Why in the news?

- **Ministry of Health** has said that **uniquely designed Integrated Government Online training'-iGOT platform** provides **self-contained** training material for COVID-19 warriors **comprising 56 modules, 196 videos and 133 training documents.**



About iGOT e-learning Platform

- The **Department of Personnel and Training** has launched a training module for the management of COVID-19 named "**Integrated Government Online training**" (iGOT) portal on DIKSHA platform, April 2020.

About Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) portal

- It is **aimed at catering the training** needs of the **frontline workers** fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The target group is **Doctors, Nurses, Central & State Govt. Officers, Civil Defence Officials, various Police Organisations, National Cadet Corps (NCC), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), National Service Scheme (NSS), Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Bharat Scouts & Guides (BSG)** and other volunteers.
- It is also **focused on enhancing the capacity building** of frontline workers to handle the **pandemic efficiently.**

Related Information

About DIKSHA platform

- It was **launched in 2017** as an **initiative of the Ministry of Human Resource Development.**
- It is **Digital Infrastructure Knowledge Sharing** platform for education and training.
- It is equipped with **explanation, practice and assessment** content linked to **NCERT and state curriculum.**
- The portal will record **complete work and accomplishment of teachers** in **educational institutes** from start to **endpoint till their retirement.**
- It also serves as **National Digital Infrastructure for Teachers.**

Topic- GS Paper II–Governance

Source-AIR

Paris Agreement on Climate Change 2015

Why in the news?

- The **United States** formally exited from the **2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change** which is a **global deal to take collective actions** for **saving the world** from **disastrous consequences of global warming.**

Gradeup UPSC Exams Super Subscription (UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)	Access to All Structured Courses & Test Series	ENROL NOW
--	--	------------------



Background

- The **US under President Donald Trump** had announced his decision to **withdraw from the Agreement in 2017**.
- It made the **US the first country to withdraw** from the **Agreement**.

Contribution of Carbon Emission by US

- The **US has contributing 14% of total carbon emission**.
- It is **currently the second biggest emitter after China (26%)**.
- The **European Union nations collectively contribute to 9% of total emission** followed by **India at 7%**.

Note:

- Recently **President Xi Jinping** announced that **China would be carbon net-zero by 2060**, and apparently **advanced the deadline** for reaching **peak emissions**.
- The **Japan and South Korea** also had announced their **intentions to raise climate action ambition** to reach respective **'net zero targets'**, aligning themselves with the **EU's similar plan**.

Topic- GS Paper III–Environment

Source-Indian Express

Tele-Law

Why in the news?

- Tele-Law has **touched a new milestone on 30th October 2020** with **4 Lakh beneficiaries** having **received legal advice** under this **through CSCs (Common Service Centres)**.

About Tele- Law

- This initiative was **launched on April 20, 2017** with an **aim to provide legal advices** in the **villages through Common Service Centers (CSC)** by the **Ministry of Law and Justice** in collaboration with the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.

Objective of Tele-law

- Under this **legal aid services** will be provided **through Common Service Centres (CSC)** at the **Panchayat level**, spread across the country.
- It is a **program by the government** where **people can seek legal advice** from **lawyers through video conferencing** available at the **Common Service Centers**, on the 'Tele Law' portal.



Role of a Para Legal Volunteer (PLV)

- Every CSC will also engage a PLV, who will be the **first point of contact for the rural citizens.**
- These PLVs will help the applicant connect with a lawyer through the **video conferencing facility at the CSC**, will help them in understanding the **legal issues and explain the advice given by lawyers.**
- A **panel of lawyers** will be provided by the **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)** in every state capital to advise the applicants through **video conferencing.**
- This scheme has been **expanded to 115 Aspirational Districts in 100 days** programme of the **Government of India.**
- A dedicated website on **Tele-Law** is maintained by the **Department of Justice** which has been designed with **support from CSC e-Governance** and has translated in to **22 languages.**

About Nyaya Bandhu Mobile Application

- It is a new mobile application meant to aid litigants in **need of legal services.**
- The **Nyaya Bandhu mobile app facilitates** the provision of **free legal services.**
- The app aims to **connect litigants** in need with **lawyers willing to offer such pro bono services.** Lawyers willing to **offer free legal services** may register themselves with the app.
- This app is also **intended to help users** pre-register their case.

Constitutional provision for Legal Aid

- **Article 39A of the Constitution of India** provides for **free legal aid** to the **poor and weaker sections** of the society and **ensures justice for all.**
- **Articles 14 and 22(1) of the Constitution** also make it obligatory for the State to **ensure equality before law** and a **legal system** which promotes justice since **equal opportunity to all.**

Note:

- The **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)** has been constituted under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987** to **monitor and evaluate implementation of legal aid programmes** and to lay down policies and principles for **making legal services available under the Act.**

Topic- GS Paper II–Governance

Source-PIB

Accelerator for Electronics Technologies to boost electronics startups

Why in the news?

- Recently **Kerala** has launched a **state-of-the-art Accelerator for Electronics Technologies (ACE)** to **boost startups.**



About Accelerator for Electronics Technologies

- It is a **first-of-its-kind initiative** in the state.
- It is a **joint initiative of Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing(C-DAC).**

Objective

- To develop itself as a **leading accelerator** in the **country's electronics technologies.**
- It also **aims to nurture the development of high-tech startups in electronics and allied disciplines.**

Related Information

About C-DAC

- It is an **autonomous scientific society** created in **1987** under the operational control **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.**
- It primarily carries out **Research and development (R&D) in IT, Electronics, and associated areas.**
- **CDAC would mentor the startups** for a **specific period** by providing them access to the **new facility's physical and intellectual infrastructure.**

Topic- GS Paper III–Employment

Source-The Hindu

National Monsoon Mission

Why in the news?

- Recently **Union Minister of Science and Technology** released the **National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) Report** on "Estimating the economic benefits of Investment in Monsoon Mission and High-Performance Computing (HPC) Facilities".



Salient Aspects of the Report

- A **total of Rs.1000 crores** have been invested in setting up **National Monsoon Mission (NMM)** and **High-performance Computing (HPC) facilities** by Government of India.

Objectives of the report

- To **estimate the economic benefits of the investments** made in **NMM and HPC**, through the **income gain to the farmers in rain-fed areas, livestock owners and fishermen** by adopting the **weather and ocean state forecast**, respectively.
- The **report also examined the economic benefits with gender perspective.**
- A **total of 173 districts (of India's total 732 districts)** across **16 of the 29 states** were considered for the **study to appropriately represent agro-climatic zones**, rain-fed areas, coverage of major crops, and incidence of extreme weather events in the country.
- 76% of the livestock owners** are using **weather information** for taking decisions on **modification of shed/shelter**; vaccination against seasonal disease; and **fodder management.**
- The **total annual economic benefits** to the **1.07 Crore Below Poverty Line (BPL) agricultural households** (farmers and livestock owners taken together) works out to be **Rs. 13,331 Crores** and **incremental benefit** over the next five years is estimated to be **about Rs. 48,056 Crores** for the **farming community.**
- Annual income gained by 53 Lakh BPL fisher households** is estimated to be **Rs. 663 Crores** and the present **value of benefits accruing to fisher-folk** works out to be **Rs. 2,391 Crores** over a **period of 5 years.**

Related Information

About National Monsoon Mission (NMM)

- It has been **launched in 2012** by **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** with a vision to develop a **state-of-the-art dynamical prediction system** for monsoon rainfall on different time scales.
- The **responsibility of execution and coordination of this mission** is vested to the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.**

Objective

To build an **ocean atmospheric model** for –

- **improved prediction of monsoon rainfall** on extended range to **seasonal time scale** (16 days to one season) and
- **improved prediction of temperature, rainfall, and extreme weather events** on **short to medium range time scale** (up to 15 days).

Note:

- **Climate Forecast System (CFS) of USA** has been **identified as the basic modelling system** for the above purpose, as it is **one of the best among the currently available coupled models**.

Topic- GS Paper III–Environment

Source-Indian Express

UN adopts India sponsored resolutions on nuclear disarmament

Why in the news?

- The **First Committee of UN General Assembly** has adopted two resolutions which were sponsored by **India** - ‘**Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons**’ and ‘**Reducing Nuclear Danger**’ under the ‘**Nuclear weapons**’ cluster.
- These resolutions **manifest India’s commitment** towards the **goal of nuclear disarmament**.



Background

About Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons

- The “**Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons**”, tabled by **India since 1982 in the General Assembly** requests the **Conference on Disarmament in Geneva**.
- The aim this **convention is to commence negotiations** on an **international convention prohibiting** the use or threat of use of **nuclear weapons** under any circumstances.

About Reducing Nuclear Danger

- The resolution on “**Reducing Nuclear Danger**”, tabled **since 1998**, draws global attention to the **risks of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons** and underscores the need for a review of nuclear doctrines.
- It calls for concrete steps to reduce such risks, including through de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons.

Related Information

About United Nations General Assembly First Committee

**Gradeup UPSC Exams
Super Subscription**
(UPSC CSE & UPSC EPFO)

Access to All
Structured Courses
& Test Series

ENROL NOW

- It is also known as the **Disarmament and International Security Committee** is one of **six main committees** at the **General Assembly of the United Nations**.
- It deals with **disarmament and international security matters**.

Topic- GS Paper II–Security /International Organization
Source-Economics Times

Project Lion


Why in the news?

- **Wildlife Institute of India** along with the **Gujarat Forest Department** has **identified six new relocation sites** apart from the **Kuno-Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary** under **Project Lion**.

PROJECT LION

Head	Year I	Year II	Year III
Translocation to Barda	54.21	24.21	9.21
Monitoring of Lion	2.24	1.66	0.58
MSTriPES Patrolling	1.48	0.32	0.12
Disease Profiling	1.22	1.15	1.15
Other expenses	0.35	0.34	0.34

* Rs in crores



SALIENT FEATURES

- **Rs 99 crore** project approved for **lion conservation**
- **NTCA, Gujarat forest department** and **WII** to implement it
- **Barda** to be developed as **second home for lions** within Gujarat

- **40-odd lions** will be **radio collared**
- **Maldharis from Barda** to be **relocated** and will receive **compensation of Rs 15 lakh each**
- **Vaccination of feral dogs and cattle**

- **Samples from feral dogs and cattle** to be **regularly collected** to test for **CDV, rabies** and other **diseases**
- **Samples from other wild animals** will also be collected to monitor for diseases

The six new sites identified for possible lion relocation in the future include:

- Madhav National Park, Madhya Pradesh
- Sitamata Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajasthan
- Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan
- Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh
- Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajasthan
- Jessore-Balaram Ambaji WLS and adjoining landscape, Gujarat

Reasons for Lion Relocation

- **Lion relocation** has been **talked about since 1995**, when the **Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary** was identified as an **alternate site**.
- The **motive behind finding a relocation site for the species** is because the **population in Gir** has **low genetic diversity**, making it **vulnerable to threats of extension** from epidemics.
- The **proposal sought to create free-ranging lion populations** within **Gujarat** and in other states to **counter this problem**.

- Last year, **over 20 lions from the Gir forest** succumbed to the **viral infection** known as **Canine distemper virus (CDV)**.

About Project Lion

- The programme has been **launched for the conservation of the Asiatic Lion**, whose last **remaining wild population** is in **Gujarat's Asiatic Lion Landscape (ALL)**.
- It aims to **focus on habitat development, engaging technologies in lion management**, addressing the **issues of disease in lions**, and will also be addressing the **Human-Wildlife conflict**.

About Asiatic Lion

- They are **confined to Gir National Park** and its surrounding environments in **Gujarat's Saurashtra district**.

Conservation Status

- They are listed in **Endangered category under IUCN**.
- Under **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule-I**
- In **CITES** they are listed in **Appendix I**

Note:

- Last year a dedicated **“Asiatic Lion Conservation Project”** has been launched by the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.
- MoEFCC has **approved the project for three financial years from 2018 to 2021**.

Topic- GS Paper III–Environment

Source-Down to Earth

Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020

Why in the news?

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** has promulgated the **Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020** to further **amend Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996**.



Highlights of the amendment

- The Ordinance aims to **ensure that all the stakeholders get an opportunity to seek unconditional stay of enforcement of arbitral awards where the underlying arbitration agreement or contract or making of the arbitral award are induced by fraud or corruption**.
- The ordinance amends the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 also **does away with the 8th Schedule of the Act** which contained the **necessary qualifications for accreditation of arbitrators**.
- An addition has been made to **Section 36** whereby if the **Court is satisfied** that a **prima facie case is made out** that the **arbitration agreement or contract** which is the **basis of the award** was **induced or effected by fraud or**

corruption, it will stay the **award unconditionally pending** disposal of the challenge made to the award **under Section 34**.

- In **Section 36 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, sub-section (3)**, after the proviso, a clause has been inserted which states that "Provided further that where the court is satisfied that a prima facie case is made out: (a) that the arbitration agreement or contract which is the basis of the award; or (b) the making of the award, was induced or effected by fraud or corruption, it shall stay the award unconditionally pending disposal of the challenge under section 34 to the award."
- **The provision will come into effect retrospectively from October 23, 2015, the ordinance states.**

Topic- GS Paper II–Governance
Source-PIB

Wilamaya Patjxa female hunter

Why in the news?

- According to the researchers at the **University of California Wilamaya Patjxa female hunter** has been **identified as the earliest hunter burial** found in the Americas which are **about 9,000 years ago**.

About the Discovery

- About 9,000 years ago, **hunter-gatherers** buried a **teenager with hunting tools** in the **Andes Mountains of South America**.
- When researchers analysed the remains, **unearthed in 2018**, they found that the hunter was a **female, aged between 17 and 19** at her death.
- Between **30% and 50% of the hunters** in these populations were female, the researchers concluded from an **analysis of burial records in the Americas**. During excavations at the high-altitude site **Wilamaya Patjxa in Peru in 2018**, archaeologists **found five burial pits with six individuals**.



Participation of Women

- This **discovery shows** that this **level of participation** is in stark contrast to recent **hunter-gatherers**, where hunting is a **decidedly male activity** with **low levels of female participation**.
- It will help the researchers to understand how **sexual division of Labour in different times and places** changed among **hunter-gatherer populations in the Americas**.

Topic- GS Paper I–History (Ancient Society)
Source-Indian Express