

Daily Current Affairs 25/08/2021

1. India's first Smog Tower inaugurated in Delhi



Why in News

• Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister of Delhi inaugurated the "country's first smog tower" at Connaught Place in Delhi.

Key Points

About Smog Tower:

- **Developed by: Tata Projects Limited** built the tower with technical support from **IIT-Delhi and IIT-Bombay**, which will analyse its data.
- **NBCC India Ltd** is the project management consultant.
- The **DPCC (Delhi Pollution Control Committee)** is the nodal agency for the tower.
- The tower was raised at a height of 24.2 metres.
- The tower can filter around 1,000 cubic metres of air per second.
- It is expected to have an impact on a 1 km radius from the centre of the tower.
- A total of 40 fans have been installed at the bottom of the tower — air will be sucked in from the top, filtered and released through the fans at the bottom.

Background:

- In November 2019, an expert panel estimated that the capital will need 213 such anti-smog towers.
- Following this, the Delhi cabinet approved the smog tower project in October 2020.
- **"IQAir"**, a **Switzerland-based air quality technology company** that measures air quality levels of selected cities based on PM2.5 concentration, ranked **Delhi the world's most polluted capital** for the third straight year in 2020.
- **Note:** Another 25-metre-tall smog tower, built by the central government at Anand Vihar, is expected to become fully operational by September 7.

Steps Taken to control Pollution in Delhi:

- Introduction of BS-VI vehicles
- Electric vehicles
- Odd-Even as an emergency measure
- Implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan
- Development of the National Air Quality Index (AQI)
- Use of Green Crackers

Source: Indian Express

2. New Geospatial Planning Portal, 'Yuktdhara'



Why in News

- **Union Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Giriraj Singh** launched a new **Geospatial Planning Portal, 'Yuktdhara'**.
- It will help in facilitating new **MGNREGA assets** using **Remote Sensing** and **GIS (Geographic Information System)** based information.
- Yuktdhara is a new portal under **Bhuvan**.

Key Points

About 'Yuktdhara':

- **Objective:** Yuktdhara platform will serve as a repository of assets (Geotags) created under various national rural development programmes i.e. **MGNREGA, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, Per Drop More Crop and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana** etc., along with field photographs.
- It is definitely a culmination of untiring joint efforts of **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and **Ministry of Rural development** made towards realising a **Government to Government (G2G) service** for rural planning in support of decentralized decision making.

About Bhuvan:

- Bhuvan, is the national Geo-portal developed and hosted by ISRO comprising Geo Spatial Data, Services and Tools for Analysis.
- It has many versatile features, for Example (1) Visualization of Satellite Imagery and Maps (2) Analysis (3) Free Data Download and (4) Download Reports to name a few.
- The Satellite Imageries are of Multi-sensor, Multi-platform and Multi-temporal in nature and can be visualized in 2D and 3D.
- Varieties of thematic maps are also hosted for analysis of various natural resources themes.
- Geoportal Bhuvan has become a de-facto geospatial platform for a number of developmental planning activities in the country.

Source: PIB

3. Earthquake Observatories



Why in News

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences Dr Jitendra Singh said that India is going to have **35 more Earthquake Observatories by the end of 2021** and **100 more such Observatories by 2026**.
- He announced it while addressing the inaugural ceremony of Joint Scientific Assembly of **International Association of Geomagnetism and Aeronomy (IAGA) - International Association of Seismology and Physics of the Earth's Interior (IASPEI)**.

Key Points

About Earthquake Observatories:

- **National Center for Seismology** is the nodal agency of the Government for monitoring of earthquake activity in the country.
- At present, India has only **115 Earthquake Observatories**.
- The most important aspect is to be able to accurately predict the time of the earthquake. This work is done by Earthquake observatories.

Earthquakes in India:

- The Indian subcontinent is considered as one of the world's most disaster-prone areas in terms of earthquakes, landslides, cyclones, floods, and tsunamis.
- According to seismic zoning mapping, India is divided into **4 zones**.
- These zones are divided on the basis of the estimation of the intensity of the earthquake. India is divided into **Zone 2, Zone 3, Zone 4, and Zone 5**.
- While Zone 2 is the least dangerous, Zone 5 is the most dangerous.
- According to the country's current seismic zone map, 59% of India's land area is under a moderate to severe seismic hazard warning, which means that India is prone to earthquakes of magnitude 7 and above.

Some of the major earthquakes in the Indian Subcontinent:

- Shillong (1897), Kangra (1905), Bihar-Nepal border (1934), Assam-Tibet border (1950), Bhuj (2001), Kashmir (2005), Sikkim (2011) and Manipur (2016).

Source: PIB

4. NeoBolt, India's first indigenous motorised wheelchair vehicle



Why in News

- **Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M)** has developed India's first indigenous motorised wheelchair vehicle, NeoBolt.

Key Points

About NeoBolt:

- It empowers wheelchair users with a convenient, safe and low-cost mode of outdoor mobility when compared to cars, auto rickshaws or modified scooters.

- It can be used even on uneven terrains.
- It has a maximum speed of 25 kmph and travels up to 25 km per charge.
- It is powered by a lithium-ion battery.
- It has been commercialised through a start-up called '**NeoMotion.**'

Note:

- The start-up has also developed and commercially launched '**NeoFly,**' a **personalized wheelchair** designed to enhance health and lifestyle.
- NeoFly is the first Indian Wheelchair that is customised to the user.

Source: **The Hindu**

5. Maritime Partnership Exercise between Indian Navy and the Philippine Navy



Why in News

- Two ships of the **Indian Navy**, namely **INS Ranvijay** and **INS Kora** carried out a Maritime Partnership Exercise with **BRP Antonio Luna** of the **Philippine Navy** on 23 Aug 2021 in the **West Philippine Sea**.

Key Points

- India and The Philippines share a very robust defence and security partnership built over

several years and spanning across all domains.

- Both navies remain committed to further strengthening bilateral collaboration in the maritime domain towards a collective aim of ensuring a stable, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Source: **PIB**

6. Congressional Gold Medal



Why in News

- Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney from New York has reintroduced legislation in the US House of Representatives to posthumously award the **Congressional Gold Medal** to **Mahatma Gandhi** for his contributions made through his methods of non-violence.
- If given the award, **Gandhi would become the first Indian to receive the Congressional Gold Medal.**

Key Points

About Congressional Gold Medal:

- It is the **highest civilian award in the United States.**
- The first recipients of the medal were participants of the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the Mexican War.

Source: **Indian Express**