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Important News: International

QS Best Student Cities Ranking, 2023

Why in News:

- The QS Best Student Cities Rankings, 2023 were released by London-based global higher education analyst 'Quacquarelli Symonds (QS).



key points:

- London has been ranked as the best city in the QS Best Student Cities Ranking, 2023, while Seoul and Munich are ranked second and third.
- Buenos Aires is ranked top among Latin American countries according to the QS Best Student Cities Ranking, 2023.
- According to the QS Best Student Cities Ranking, 2023, the highest-ranked city in India is Mumbai, which is ranked 103rd globally.
- Mumbai is followed by Bangalore at 114th position this year, while Chennai and Delhi have been ranked 125th and 129th respectively in the list.

- The QS Best Student Cities Ranking provides independent data on factors that are relevant to a student's decision to study, including university standards, affordability, quality of life, views of past students studying in that destination, etc.

Source: Times of India

Hi-tech aircraft carrier Fujian

Why in News:

- China has unveiled its first new-generation indigenous aircraft carrier, the Type 003, Fujian.



key points:

- Fujian is named after the eastern coastal province of China which is located near Taiwan.
- The total weight of the Fujian is 80,000 tons, which is much higher than the Chinese carriers currently available in China and on par with the aircraft carriers of the US Navy.
- Fujian is currently joined by two other carriers - Shandong and Liaoning, operated by China.
- Fujian is built with the latest launch technology – the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System, first developed by the US Navy.

Source: Times of India

Important News: National

DBT scheme launched for direct financial assistance to trainees

why in News:

- The National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) was made a part of the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) program by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), with the help of which direct government financial assistance will be provided to all the trainees.



key points:

- The National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) was launched on 19 August 2016 with the objective of promoting apprenticeship and training programs in the country and providing financial assistance to training establishments.
- The objective of this scheme is to promote apprenticeship under Skill India and help in realizing its potential.

- The program aims to motivate employers to hire apprentices and help them find the right jobs while maximizing their capabilities through intensive skill development.
- With the introduction of the DBT scheme by the government, its contribution will be directly transferred to the bank accounts of the trainees through National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), which will be payable up to 25% of the scholarship i.e., up to Rs 1500 per month.
- DBT was introduced on January 1, 2013, with the main objective of revamping the existing process in welfare schemes by improving the delivery system of the government and speeding up the flow of money and information, providing security, and reducing the number of frauds.

Source: Indian Express

Important News: Environment

1. Nitrate absorption in plants

Why in the news:

- A new pathway has been discovered by researchers led by researchers from the National Center of Biological Sciences, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bengaluru (NCBS-TIFR) that regulates nitrate absorption in plants.



key points:

- The gene transcription factor MADS27, which regulates nitrate absorption, root development, and stress tolerance, is activated by the micro-RNA, miR444.
- The new discovery suggests that 'miR444' may be used to enhance nitrate absorption, enhance root development and help the plant tolerate greater stress.
- Nitrogen is one of the most important macronutrients necessary for a plant's growth.
- Nitrates also play a role in controlling genome-wide gene expression that controls root system architecture, flowering time, leaf development, etc.
- Overuse of nitrates in fertilizers leads to the accumulation of nitrates in water and soil. This accumulation reduces soil and water pollution as well as increases the contribution of greenhouse gases.

Source: The Hindu

Important News: Defence

2. ALH Squadron INAS 324 at Visakhapatnam

Why in News:

- Indian Naval Air Squadron 324 was inducted into the Indian Navy in an impressive commissioning ceremony held at INS Dega, Visakhapatnam in the presence of Vice-Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta, AVSM, YSM, VSM, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command.



key points:

- The unit is the first squadron of the Navy to operate indigenously designed and manufactured Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Mk III (MR) helicopters on the Eastern Seaboard.
- INAS 324 codenamed "Kestrels" is a bird of prey and has good sensory capabilities which signify the aircraft and the intended role of this air squadron.
- The ALH Mk III helicopters are equipped with state-of-the-art equipment including state-of-the-art surveillance radars and electro-optical sensors.
- In addition to their core roles of Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), these helicopters can be deployed for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations as well as special operations with Marine Commandos.

Source: PIB

Important News: Science & Tech

3. Space tourism

Why in News:

- A new study has found that rocket launches could negatively affect the climate and the ozone layer amid growing space tourism competition among commercial companies such as Virgin Galactic, SpaceX, and Blue Origin.



key points:

- Researchers found that soot emissions from rocket launches are far more effective at heating the atmosphere than other sources.
- Routine launches by the fast-growing space tourism industry "could undermine the progress made by the Montreal Protocol in reversing ozone depletion," according to researchers.
- The Montreal Protocol is a landmark international treaty that was adopted in Montreal in 1987 and aims to protect the Earth's ozone layer by regulating the production and consumption of about 100 chemicals called ozone-depleting substances (ODS).
- According to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), without this treaty, ozone depletion would have increased more than ten times by 2050 compared to current levels.

Source: Indian Express