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Electoral Bond Scheme 2018

Why in News?

Government of India has notified the Electoral Bond Scheme 2018 vide Gazette Notification.

About Electoral Bonds:

- As per provisions of the Scheme, Electoral Bonds may be purchased by a person, who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.
- A person being an individual can buy Electoral Bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.
- Only the Political Parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951) and which secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.
- The Electoral Bonds shall be encashed by an eligible Political Party only through a Bank account with the Authorized Bank.
- It may be noted that Electoral Bonds shall be valid for fifteen days from the date of issue and no payment shall be made to any payee Political Party if the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period.

The Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account shall be credited on the same day.

Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)

Why in News?

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organized a National consultation with States/UTs to seek feedback on draft guidelines for implementing PMRSSM, on 23rd April, 2018 at New Delhi. The workshop was attended by CEOs of the State Health Agency, State Nodal Officers and Senior IT officials of the state agencies. Most of the States participated in the consultations, except for few like Delhi & West Bengal.



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About the Yojana

The Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) aims at correcting the imbalances in the availability of affordable healthcare facilities in the different parts of the country in general, and augmenting facilities for quality medical education in the under-served States in particular. The scheme was approved in March 2006.

The first phase in the PMSSY has two components - setting up of six institutions in the line of AIIMS; and upgradation of 13 existing Government medical college institutions.

In the second phase of PMSSY, the Government has approved the setting up of two more AIIMS-like institutions, one each in the States of West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh and upgradation of six medical college institutions

In the third phase of PMSSY, it is proposed to upgrade the following existing medical college institutions namely

- Government Medical College, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh
- Government Medical College, Rewa, Madhya Pradesh
- Government Medical College, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh
- Government Medical College, Dharbanga, Bihar
- Government Medical College, Kozhikode, Kerala
- Vijaynagar Institute of Medical Sciences, Bellary, Karnataka
- Government Medical College, Muzaffarpur, Bihar

The states were divided into three sub groups to ensure detailed deliberations and seek in-depth inputs on the draft set of guidelines.

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Atal New India Challenge

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) under the NITI Aayog shall be launching the Atal New India Challenge on Thursday, 26th April 2018.

Under the Atal New India Challenge, which shall be run in collaboration with five ministries, AIM will invite prospective innovators/MSMEs/start-ups to design market-ready products, using cutting edge technologies or prototypes across 17 identified focus areas such as Climate Smart Agriculture, Smart Mobility, Predictive Maintenance of Rolling Stock, Waste Management etc.



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Applicants showing capability, intent and potential to productize technologies will be awarded grants up to Rs. One crore.

This grant will be further supplemented by mentoring, handholding, incubating and other support as needed at various stages of commercialisation, while generating wider deployment for the product.

About AIM:

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) including Self-Employment and Talent Utilization (SETU) is Government of India's endeavour to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Its objective is to serve as a platform for promotion of world-class Innovation Hubs, Grand Challenges, Start-up businesses and other self-employment activities, particularly in technology driven areas.

The Atal Innovation Mission shall have two core functions:

- **Entrepreneurship promotion** through Self-Employment and Talent Utilization, wherein innovators would be supported and mentored to become successful entrepreneurs
- **Innovation promotion:** to provide a platform where innovative ideas are generated
- Atal Tinkering Labs
- Atal Incubation Centers
- Scale-up support to Established Incubators

Cabinet approves restructured National Bamboo Mission

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi today has approved Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Bamboo Mission (NBM) under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) during remaining period of Fourteenth Finance Commission (2018-19 & 2019-20).

The Mission would ensure holistic development of the bamboo sector by addressing complete value chain and establishing effective linkage of producers (farmers) with industry.



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Beneficiaries:

The scheme will benefit directly and indirectly the farmers as well as local artisans and associated personnels engaged in bamboo sector including associated industries.

Since it is proposed to bring about one lakh ha area under plantation, it is expected that about one lakh farmers would be directly benefitted in terms of plantation.

States/ districts covered:

The Mission will focus on development of bamboo in limited States where it has social, commercial and economical advantage, particularly in the North Eastern region and States including Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

The Mission is expected to establish about 4000 treatment/ product development units and bring more than 100000 ha area under plantation.

Impact:

Bamboo plantation will contribute to optimizing farm productivity and income thereby enhancing livelihood opportunities of small & marginal farmers including landless and women as well as provide quality material to industry.

Thus, the Mission will not only serve as a potential instrument for enhancing income of farmers but also contributing towards climate resilience and environmental benefits.

The Mission will also help in creating employment generation directly or indirectly in both skilled and unskilled segments.

Details:

The restructured NBM strives to -

(i) To increase the area under bamboo plantation in non forest Government and private lands to supplement farm income and contribute towards resilience to climate change.



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- (ii) To improve post-harvest management through establishment of innovative primary processing units, treatment and seasoning plants, primary treatment and seasoning plants, preservation technologies and market infrastructure.
- (iii) To promote product development at micro, small and medium levels and feed bigger industry.
- (iv) To rejuvenate the under developed bamboo industry in India.
- (v) To promote skill development, capacity building, awareness generation for development of bamboo sector.

Details and progress of scheme if already running:

National Bamboo Mission (NBM) was initially started as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in 2006-07 and was subsumed under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) during 2014-15 and continued till 2015-16.

Funds were released thereafter only for maintenance of bamboo plantations raised earlier under NBM, and no new work or annual action plan was initiated. Since 2006-07, an area of 3.62 lakh ha covered under bamboo plantations and 39 bamboo wholesale markets, 40 bamboo bazaars and 29 retail outlets were set up.

New Pollution Forecast System:

India is tying up with the United States and Finland to develop a pollution-forecast system that will help anticipate particulate matter (PM) levels at least two days in advance and at a greater resolution than what is possible now.

The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will be coordinating this exercise and the plan is to have a system in place by winter, according to Madhavan Rajeevan, secretary, MoES.

Currently, the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), run out of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, serves as the apex forecaster of pollution trends in Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad. It generates a likely air quality profile, a day in advance, for these cities. I

ITM is an organisation under the MoES.



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The new system, to be jointly developed with expertise from the Finnish Meteorological Institute and the U.S.' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, will use a different modelling approach as well as computational techniques from that employed in the SAFAR model.

Better resolution

"SAFAR will continue to be the backbone [for pollution forecast] but this system, which will require our scientists to get special training, will use a different method of analysis. This could mean better resolution and more accurate forecasts.

A key focus would be to develop forecasts around the "stubble-burning season" that adds to Delhi's pollution woes in the winter.

This refers to the partially-burnt straw and chaff from fields in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, when farmers are preparing their fields for the sowing season. "We hope to develop the system before this winter," Mr. Rajeevan added.

Last week, the Union Environment Ministry released a draft of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) that aims to improve air quality monitoring in India by increasing the number of pollution monitoring stations and, incorporating it into a pollution forecast system.

Conclusion of Exercise Gaganshakti-2018

The Indian Air Force conducted pan India Exercise Gagan Shakti-2018 from 08-22 Apr 2018.

Objectives:

The aim of the exercise was real time coordination, deployment and employment of air power in a short and intense battle scenario.

For an exercise of such scale, the planning process started almost nine months back.

During Gagan Shakti-2018, IAF exercised its entire war fighting machinery to validate its concept of operations and war waging capability. The focus of the exercise was to check the viability of our operational plans and learn meaningful lesson

Exercise Gagan Shakti-2018 provided IAF with an excellent opportunity to practice its war time drills and undertake operations in realistic scenario.



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Activities were undertaken in a cohesive manner to achieve the stated objectives of the Indian Air Force, in case of any contingency.

The exercise also enabled the IAF to validate operational efficacy of new platforms and refine existing Standard Operating Procedures. Joint operations with Army and Navy, conducted during the exercise, would help in achieving better operational synergy between the three services, in application of combat power.

India signs loan agreement with World Bank for US\$ 125 million for "Innovate in India for Inclusiveness Project"

A Loan Agreement for IBRD credit of US\$ 125 (equivalent) for the "Innovate in India for Inclusiveness Project" was signed with the World Bank .

The Objectives of the project is

- to nurture indigenous innovation, foster local product development and accelerate commercialization process by bridging critical skill and infrastructure gaps to promote affordable and innovative healthcare products generation for inclusive development and increasing competitiveness in India.
- The project would support consortia of public, private, and the academic institutions to overcome the key market failures currently holding back the development of an innovative biopharmaceutical and medical devices industry in India.