



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 13-June-2018

General Studies-1

River Bhavani

Why in News?

Flood alert has been sounded to people living along River Bhavani banks in Mettupalayam taluk, Tamil Nadu.

About Bhavani river:

- Bhavani River, is a tributary of the River Cauvery originating from the South West Corner of the Nilgiri hills of the Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu. It drains Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka.
- It is the second longest river in Tamil Nadu. It enters Kerala through Palakkad district. It passes through the Silent Valley National Park in Kerala.

Twelve major rivulets including West and East Varagar rivers join Bhavani draining the southern Nilgiri slopes

Swacch Iconic Places

Why in News?

Ten new iconic sites, namely, RaghavendraSwamy Temple (Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh); Hazardwari Palace (Murshidabad, West Bengal); Brahma Sarovar Temple (Kurukshetra, Haryana); VidurKuti (Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh); Mana village (Chamoli, Uttarakhand); Pangong Lake (Leh-Ladakh, J&K); Nagvasuki Temple (Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh); ImaKeithal/market (Imphal, Manipur); Sabarimala Temple (Kerala); and Kanvashram (Uttarakhand) have been taken up under Phase III of the flagship project Swachh Iconic Places (SIP) of the Swachh Bharat Mission.

About Swacch Iconic Places

The project envisioned by the Prime Minister is being coordinated by Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation with the support of State governments and local administration.



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SIP is a collaborative project with three other central Ministries: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, M/o Culture, and M/o Tourism. It also involves local administrations in the concerned States and Public Sector and Private Companies as sponsoring partners.

Launched in 2016, the Phase I iconic places are: Ajmer Sharif Dargah, CST Mumbai, Golden Temple, Kamakhya Temple, Maikarnika Ghat, Meenakshi Temple, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, Shree Jagannath Temple, The Taj Mahal and Tirupati Temple.

Phase II of Swachh Iconic Places was launched in Nov 2017, and included Gangotri, Yamunotri, Mahakaleswar Temple, Charminar, Convent and Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Kalady, Gommateswara, Baidyanath Dham, Gaya Tirth and Somnath temple.

Phase I iconic sites have seen notable initiatives taken up like:

Improved sewage infrastructure, drainage facilities,

Installation of Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) & improved sanitation facilities,

Water vending machines (Water ATMs), Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) set-up, structure restoration, roads maintenance, lighting arrangements, beautification of parks, better transport facilities in approach and access areas besides at the main sites.

General Studies-1

Atal Innovation Mission

Why in News?

NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has selected 3,000 additional schools for the establishment of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs), bringing the total number of ATL schools to 5,441.

The selected schools shall receive a grant of Rs 20 lakh spread over the next five years to establish Atal Tinkering Labs for nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial spirit among secondary school children across India.



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ATLs will soon be established in every district of India, seeking to enable an innovation ecosystem, which will facilitate transformational change in technological innovation and pedagogy.

These additional schools will facilitate the creation of over One Million Neoteric Child Innovators by 2020.

ATLs will function as innovation hubs for these student innovators to explore solutions to unique local problems which they come across in their everyday lives.

About Atal Innovation Mission of NITI Aayog

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

AIM is mandated to create an umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of the country and revolutionizing the innovation eco-system - touching upon the entire innovation life cycle through various programs.

The Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs) create innovators, Atal Incubation Centres and support to Established Incubation Centres ensure that innovations are taken to the market and help create enterprises around these innovations.

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US-N.Korea Summit:

The historic summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Singapore is an affirmation of the power of diplomacy.

Until a few months ago, the two countries had been trading nuclear threats, as the North raced along with its [nuclear weapons](#) programme.

Outcomes of summit:

In the brief joint statement after their meeting, Mr. Kim iterated his "firm and unwavering commitment to complete denuclearisation" of the Korean Peninsula, while Mr. Trump offered security guarantees to the North.



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Mr. Kim had earlier promised to denuclearise the peninsula in return for security assurances, while Mr. Trump had promised that the North would be welcomed into the international community as a respectable member and be allowed to prosper economically.

The two leaders have put these demands and promises into a document that could guide future diplomatic engagement.

Mr. Trump also announced that he would end the regular American "war games" with South Korea, a concession to the North.

The joint statement provided few specifics on how denuclearisation can take place or how North Korea's steps to dismantle its arsenal will be monitored. There are no deadlines mentioned.

There is no reference to China, North Korea's only ally. There has been no word on whether the two will establish formal diplomatic ties.

Besides, being unpredictable and impulsive, Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim must also stare down hardline elements in their respective administrations. This bold beginning must not be wasted.

India-central asia

India joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) as a full-fledged member for the first time at the Qingdao summit this month, a development that may over time influence Central Asian geopolitics.

Background:

The historical rivalry between the British Empire in the Indian subcontinent and Tsarist Russia in the 19th and early 20th centuries, known as the Great Game, was a clash of imperial ambitions between two great powers, in which the territory of Afghanistan helped minimise the risk of direct confrontation between them.

In the early and mid-19th century, British officials of the East India Company feared that the advance of Tsarist Russia into the Khanates of Central Asia might prove detrimental to British interests in the Indian subcontinent.



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The officials were worried that if the Russians crossed Afghanistan, it would be easier for them to cross over the plains of Punjab and advance deep into the territories of northern India.

Today's Status of Central Asia:

This logic applies equally to what has come to be known as the "New Great Game", or the modern geopolitics in Central Asia since the 1991 break-up of the Soviet Union, characterised by competition among the U.S., the U.K. and other NATO member states on the one hand, and Russia, China and other states of the SCO on the other.

Central Asia has historically witnessed tussles over access to the region's rich natural resources, because preferential access to these resources better enable energy-hungry global powers to meet their domestic demand.

Built around this immense imperative for natural resources, the New Great Game is manifested in efforts to expand regional connectivity, with links through trade, commerce, energy, ideology, ethnicity and even terrorism.

The New Great Game became more entrenched after the 9/11 attacks in the U.S., with Washington getting deeply enmeshed in the region.

India's Stake in the region:

India's engagement with the region has also become active, with the Ministry of External Affairs making it clear that it considers the Central Asian region to be India's "extended neighbourhood."

India and Central Asia have enjoyed shared cultural linkages for around 2,000 years. From the Kushan Empire in ancient India to the Mughal Empire later, the connectivity between the two regions has always been considerable.

When India got independence and parts of modern-day Central Asia were within the USSR rubric, India was one of the few countries that managed to maintain its access to this region.

Today, projects such as the Chabahar port and the International North-South Transport Corridor have increased India's involvement and stakes in the region's stability.



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Conclusion:

India's admission to the SCO was a step towards its more holistic engagement with the region. Given the multipolar competition for Central Asia's resource bounty, India would do well to tread lightly, yet manoeuvre to protect its interests.

General studies-3

Threat from Artificial intelligence

Norman: also known as the first psychopathic artificial intelligence, just unveiled by US researchers.

Norman "represents a case study on the dangers of Artificial Intelligence gone wrong when biased data is used in machine learning algorithms..

Pinar Yanardag, Manuel Cebrian and Iyad Rahwan, part of an MIT team, added: "there is a central idea in machine learning: the data you use to teach a machine learning algorithm can significantly influence its behavior."

"So when we talk about AI algorithms being biased or unfair, the culprit is often not the algorithm itself, but the biased data that was fed to it," they said via email.

Hence the idea of creating Norman, which was named after the psychopathic killer Norman Bates in the 1960 Alfred Hitchcock film "Psycho."

Norman was "fed" only with short legends describing images of "people dying" found on the Reddit internet platform.

The researchers then submitted images of ink blots, as in the Rorschach psychological test, to determine what Norman was seeing and compare his answers to those of traditionally trained AI.

The results are scary, to say the least: where traditional AI sees "two people standing close to each other," Norman sees in the same spot of ink "a man who jumps out a window."

And when Norman distinguishes "a man shot to death by his screaming wife," the other AI detects "a person holding an umbrella."



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Business Correspondents

Why in News?

The government is planning to make all CSCs across the country Business Correspondents of Banks. 2.90 lakh CSCs will be able to work as Business Correspondents (BCs).

About Business Correspondents?

Business Correspondents are retail agents engaged by banks for providing banking services at locations other than a bank branch/ATM.

Banks are required to take full responsibility for the acts of omission and commission of the BCs that they engage and have, therefore, to ensure thorough due diligence and additional safeguards for minimizing the agency risk.

Basically, BCs enable a bank to expand its outreach and offer limited range of banking services at low cost, as setting up a brick and mortar branch may not be viable in all cases. BCs, thus, are an integral part of a business strategy for achieving greater financial inclusion.

What they can do?

BCs are permitted to perform a variety of activities which include identification of borrowers, collection and preliminary processing of loan applications including verification of primary information/data, creating awareness about savings and other products, education and advice on managing money and debt counseling, processing and submission of applications to banks, promoting, nurturing and monitoring of Self Help Groups/ Joint Liability Groups, post-sanction monitoring, follow-up of recovery.

They can also attend to collection of small value deposit, disbursement of small value credit, recovery of principal / collection of interest, sale of micro insurance/ mutual fund products/ pension products/ other third party products and receipt and delivery of small value remittances/ other payment instruments.



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Benefits:

- Corporates with large and widespread retail network bring in larger resources, higher organizational strength and financial backing needed for a large network of BCs besides providing financial security to the bank.
- Corporates as BC would be more suitable to render banking services in accordance with the bank's internal policies and standards than individuals and other small entities.
- Over years, these companies have developed efficient systems of monitoring and control over the retail outlets/franchises, including cash management, which could be used to advantage. These outlets are already dealing with the local population and are familiar with them.
- The shopkeepers and other retail agents of the large corporates may be more comfortable dealing with the company that they are already used to and familiar with, rather than with the bank.
- Failure of large companies as BCs would mean a reputation risk to the company and endanger its substantive business. As such, the companies could be relied upon to ensure that their agents do not jeopardize their reputation.
- A corporate is likely to continue as BC for a longer period than individuals, thus ensuring continuity of services.

SURYA KIRAN

Exercise SURYA KIRAN-XIII, a joint military training exercise between India & Nepal culminated today at Pithoragarh, wherein the troops of both Armies participated in 14-day long joint training based on counter terrorist operations.

Besides training, both the contingents also participated in a number of extra-curricular activities including friendly Football, Basketball, Volleyball matches and a cultural event on the final day to increase the bonhomie between troops.

The joint training was undoubtedly, an unprecedented success. Besides promoting understanding and inter-operability between the two armies, it further helped in cementing ties between both the nations.