



## C.A From 1<sup>st</sup> June to 10<sup>th</sup> June

### **Badshahi Ashoorkhana**

#### **Why in News?**

Telangana government and Aga Khan Trust are working to restore Hyderabad's 17th century Badshahi Ashoorkhana.

About Hyderabad's 17th century Badshahi Ashoorkhana:

- The 400-year old Ashoorkhana was built by Muhammed Quli Qutub Shah.
- It was a house of mourning, where large congregations of Muslims gathered in memory of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain during the month of Muharram.
- The building consists of a Kaman, Naqqar Khana (where ceremonial drums are beaten), Niyaz Khana (where visitors are fed), Sarai Khana (place to rest), Abdar Khana (drinking water is stored), the chabutra (platform) and a guard room.
- During the rule of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, in 1178 Hijri (about 1764 AD), the Ashoorkhana was converted into a bandikhana. For 80 years, it was used as a stable where horses were kept, before it was restored as a place of worship by the then mutawalli Mir Nawazish Ali Khan.
- The eight wooden pillars were reconstructed and the alams were reinstalled. During this time, the main entrance, Bab-e-Faiz-e-Imam-e-Alamiyan, was also constructed.

#### **Gopabandhu Das:**

- Gopabandhu Das (1877–1928) was a social worker, reformer, political activist, journalist, poet and essayist from Odisha. He was popularly known as Utkalamani (Jewel of Utkal or Orissa).
- He won election to the Legislative Council that had been created in 1909 under the terms of the Morley-Minto Reforms.
- He became the first president of Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee in 1920, holding the post until 1928, and he welcomed Gandhi to the province in 1921.



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### **Reform works:**

- He started a discussion group, called Kartavya Bodhini Samiti (Duty Awakening Society), in which he and his friends considered social, economic and political problems.
- He established a school at Sakhigopala, near Puri.[1] Popularly known as Satyabadi Bakul Bana Bidyalaya, but called the Universal Education League by Das, it was inspired by the Deccan Education Society, operated in the gurukula tradition and aimed to impart a liberal education on a non-sectarian basis, despite opposition from orthodox Brahmins.
- He was influenced by Swadeshi movement and took part in the non-cooperation movement.
- He also launched and acted as editor for a short-lived monthly literary magazine titled Satyabadi from the campus of his school. Through this he was able to indulge his childhood aspirations to be a poet.

### **Cauvery Management Authority**

#### **Why in News?**

Acting on the Supreme Court's direction, the Centre recently constituted a Cauvery Water Management Authority (CMA) to address the dispute over sharing of river water among Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Puducherry.

#### **About the Cauvery Management Authority:**

The authority would comprise a chairman, eight members besides a secretary. Out of eight members, two each will be full-time and part-time members, while the rest four would be part-time members from states.

The authority will exercise power and discharge such duty for "sufficient and expedient for securing compliance and implementation" of the Supreme Court order in relation to "storage, apportionment, regulation and control of Cauvery waters".



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It can also seek the help of the central government for implementation of the award and take appropriate action.

#### **Other functions:**

- The authority will supervise operation of reservoirs and with regulation of water releases therefrom with the assistance of regulation committee.
- The authority will also look at regulated release of water by Karnataka, at the inter-state contact point presently identified as Billigundulu gauge and discharge station, located on the common border of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- The authority at the beginning of the water year (June 1 each year) would determine the total residual storage in the specified reservoirs.
- The authority has also been tasked to advise the states to take suitable measures to improve water use efficiency, by way of promoting micro-irrigation (drip and sprinkler), change in cropping pattern, improved agronomic practices, system deficiency correction and command area development.
- It has to also prepare an annual report covering the activities of the authority for the preceding year. The Centre will initially contribute a sum of Rs 2 crore for the functioning of the authority.

#### **About Cauvery:**

- Cauvery River rises on Brahmagiri Hill of the Western Ghats in south-western Karnataka state.
- It flows in a south-easterly direction for 475 miles through the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- Before emptying into the Bay of Bengal south of Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu, the river breaks into a large number of distributaries forming a wide delta called the "garden of southern India." The river is important for its irrigation canal projects.
- In the upper course, at the Krishnaraja Sagara, the Kaveri is joined by two tributaries, the Hemavati and Lakshmantirtha, where a dam was constructed for irrigation.



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- Upon entering Tamil Nadu, the Kaveri continues through a series of twisted wild gorges until it reaches Hogenakal Falls. There the Mettur Dam was constructed for irrigation and hydel power.
- It's main tributaries are the Kabani (Kabbani), Amaravati, Noyil, and Bhavani rivers.

### **Agni-5 Ballistic Missile**

India recently successfully test-fired its indigenously developed nuclear capable Long Range Ballistic Missile Agni-5 from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast.

### **About Agni-5 Ballistic Missile:**

- It is a surface-to-surface missile which can carry nuclear warhead weighing 1.5 tonnes to a distance of over 5,000 km and is the longest missile in India's arsenal capable of reaching most parts of China.
- The missile features many new indigenously-developed technologies, including the very high accuracy Ring Laser Gyro based Inertial Navigation System (RINS), and the most modern and accurate Micro Navigation System (MINS) which improves the accuracy of the missile.

India joins the elite club: With this missile, India has joined an elite club of nations that possess the ICBM launch capability. Only the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – China, France, Russia, the United States and Britain, along with Israel, have so far possessed such long-range missiles.



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**Odisha beach is Asia's first to get 'Blue Flag' tag**

The Chandrabhaga beach on the Konark coast of Odisha will be the first in Asia to get the Blue Flag certification.

Similar efforts:

Twelve more beaches in the country are being developed by the Society for Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM), an Environment Ministry's body working for the management of coastal areas, in accordance with the Blue Flag standards.

**About Blue flag project:**

Launched in December 2017 by the Environment Ministry, the prime objective of the project is to enhance standards of cleanliness, upkeep and basic amenities at beaches. Under the project, each state or union territory has been asked to nominate a beach which will be funded through the ongoing Integrated Coastal Management Programme.

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**Criteria for certification:**

To achieve the Blue Flag standards, a beach has to strictly comply with 33 environment and tourism-related conditions.

The standards were established by the Copenhagen-based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) in 1985.

For example- a beach must be plastic-free and equipped with a waste management system. Clean water should be available for tourists, apart from



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international amenities. The beach should have facilities for studying the environmental impact around the area.

### **AITUC**

#### **Why in News?**

Accusing the Centre of running an “anti-worker government”, leading trade union body AITUC is planning to launch a nationwide campaign against the government.

#### **About AITUC:**

- The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) is the oldest trade union federations in India.
- It was founded in 1920 in Bombay by Lala Lajpat Rai, Joseph Baptista, N. M. Joshi, Diwan Chaman Lall and a few others.
- Until 1945 when unions became organised on party lines, it was the primary trade union organisation in India. Since then, it has been associated with the Communist Party of India.
- AITUC is a founder member of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

### **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (IRWA)**

#### **Why in News?**

Based on the observations made by Parliamentary Standing Committee and recommendation made by the National Commission for Women on the basis of consultation with civil society groups and likeminded individuals, WCD has proposed amendments in IRWA keeping in mind the recent technological



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advancement in the field of communications such as social media platforms, over the top services etc.

#### **Reforms proposed:**

- Amendment in definition of term advertisement to include digital form or electronic form or hoardings, or through SMS, MMS etc.
- Amendment in definition of distribution to include publication, license or uploading using computer resource, or communication device or in.
- Insertion of a new definition to define the term publish.
- Amendment in section 4 to include that No person shall publish or distribute or cause to be published or cause to be distributed by any means any material which contains indecent representation of women in any form:
- Penalty similar to that provided under the Information Technology Act, 2000.

#### **Creation of new authority:**

- Creation of a Centralised Authority under the aegis of National Commission of Women (NCW).
- This Authority will be headed by Member Secretary, NCW, having representatives from Advertising Standards Council of India, Press Council of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and one member having experience of working on women issues.
- This Centralised Authority will be authorized to receive complaints or grievances regarding any programme or advertisement broadcasted or publication and investigate/ examine all matters relating to the indecent representation of women.

#### **What necessitated this?**

Reforms have been proposed keeping in mind the recent technological advancements.



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The need was felt to widen the scope of the law so as to cover such forms of media on one hand and to strengthen the existing safeguards to prevent indecent representation of women through any media form on the other.

Hence, the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Amendment Bill, 2012 was introduced in Rajya Sabha December, 2012 which referred the Bill to Department related Parliament Standing Committee for consideration.

### **JANAUSHADHI SUVIDHA**

The government has launched the 'JANAUSHADHI SUVIDHA', the Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin, under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).

The affordable sanitary napkins will now become available at over 3600 Janaushadhi Kendras functional in 33 States/UTs across India.

### **About Janaushadhi Suvidha:**

Jan Aushadhi Suvidha comes with a special additive, which makes Sanitary napkin biodegradable when it comes in contact with oxygen after being discarded.

This would ensure 'Swachhta, Swasthya and Suvidha' for the underprivileged Women of India and go a long way in the achievement of vision of Affordable and Quality Healthcare for All.

### **Significance of the move:**

The average price of sanitary napkins available in the market today is around Rs. 8 per pad, whereas now with the launch of the SUVIDHA napkins at Rs.



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2.50 per pad, this will go a long way in making the basic hygiene requirement aid for Women affordable for the underprivileged sections.

This is one of the most important requirement in ensuring the Health Security to that section of Women in India who still use unhygienic aids during menstrual period due to non-affordability of some of the popular brands of sanitary napkins available in the market today.

Such unhygienic aids cause fungal infections, Reproductive Tract Infection, Urinary Tract Infection, Cervical cancer and also make women vulnerable to infertility.

#### **About PMBJP:**

'Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana' is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Govt. Of India, to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through special kendra's known as Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra.

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra (PMBJK) have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.

Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI) is the implementing agency of PMBJP. BPPI (Bureau of Pharma Public Sector Undertakings of India) has been established under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Govt. of India, with the support of all the CPSUs.

#### **What is a Generic Medicine?**

Generic medicines are unbranded medicines which are equally safe and having the same efficacy as that of branded medicines in terms of their therapeutic value. The prices of generic medicines are much cheaper than their branded equivalent.



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## **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**

### **Why in News?**

International Air Transport Association (IATA) recently castigated India for taxing international tickets, as it asked governments to facilitate the growth of worldwide connectivity by avoiding creeping re-regulation, maintaining the integrity of global standards and addressing a capacity crisis.

### **About IATA:**

What is it?

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is the trade association for the world's airlines, representing some 280 airlines or 83% of total air traffic. Formed in April 1945, it is the successor to the International Air Traffic Association, which was formed in 1919.

What it does?

IATA supports airline activity and helps formulate industry policy and standards. It also provides consulting and training services in many areas crucial to aviation.

Headquarters: It is headquartered in Montreal, Quebec, Canada with Executive Offices in Geneva, Switzerland.

## **Resource Efficiency Cell**



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MoEFCC and TERI have entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to set up a resource efficiency cell in the Ministry.

### **Aims and objectives:**

- The main objectives of the Cell are to provide a platform to mainstream resource efficiency in public policy.
- It aims to achieve this through coordinated thinking among the various relevant Ministries and agencies for promoting resource efficiency in the use of materials in the country.
- It also aims to ensure a 'systems' thinking based on materials, products and processes, apart from enabling the preparation of an overarching resource efficiency policy for India and coordinated sectoral policies and regulatory mechanisms.

### **Strategy on Resource Efficiency:**

- NITI Aayog in collaboration with the European Union delegation to India have released the Strategy on Resource Efficiency. The strategy aims to promote resource efficiency in India.
- This strategy is the first policy document to emphasize resource productivity in the country. The Strategy emphasizes on Sustainable Public Procurement (SSP) as an action agenda which will be the market transformation tool to transform to a resource efficient economy.
- It is developed with the recommendations from the Indian Resource Efficiency Programme (IREP), launched by the Indian Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and Indian Resource Panel (InRP) in April 2017.

### **What is Resource Efficiency and why do we need it?**

- Resource efficiency very simply put is making more with fewer materials. In practice, through a life-cycle approach, it leads to minimizing impact



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on environment & the associated societal burdens, transforming 'waste' into 'resources' fostering circular economy, and strengthening resource security.

- Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy are important goals and central principles for achieving sustainable development. Sustainability is a global priority and SDGs commitment and 11th Five year plan also clearly enunciate importance of Resource efficiency (RE).

#### **Way ahead:**

India's large population, rapid urbanization and expanding industrial production have led to exploitation of available limited natural resources with concerns regarding resource depletion and future availability becoming more pronounced.

Ensuring resource security requires and integrated, concerted and collaborative approach in order to fulfill the needs of a vast and growing population. Also, the environmental burdens emanating due to resource extraction, utilization and disposal, including land degradation, biodiversity loss, as well as air and water pollution remain of great concern, Enhancing resource efficiency (RE) and promoting the use of secondary raw materials (SRM) is a pertinent strategy to address these challenges and reduce dependence on primary resource.

#### **Ganga Praharis**

#### **Why in News?**

A group of 427 trained volunteers, called Ganga Praharis, are reaching to each and every house in areas along river Ganga to educate them about the importance of protecting river's bio-diversity. They are spread over Ganga basin states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal.

#### **About Ganga Praharis:**



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### **Who are Ganga Praharis?**

They are new grassroots-level volunteers to protect the bio-diversity of river Ganga.

They are roped-in by Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun as part of the "Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation" project being sponsored by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) under the aegis of the Namami Gange programme.

### **Skills:**

Ganga Praharis are well trained in ecological monitoring of Ganga aqua life, plantation techniques, awareness creation and community mobilization. They are trained through a series of national, state and site level workshops in diverse skills such as ecological surveys, rescue and rehabilitation of aquatic species, awareness meetings, social interactions and green livelihood skills.

### **Roles and functions:**

- The Ganga Praharis will be linked to various local environmental authorities, non-governmental stakeholders in their respective states and various other national, academic and research institutions for their capacity development.
- Not only do these Ganga Praharis performing the task of conserving the deteriorating biodiversity of river Ganga, they are also motivating other people to spread the clean Ganga message, thus, contributing in making clean Ganga mission a mass movement.
- The Ganga Praharis will be the role models in inspiring other members of the community to join hands in the efforts for conservation of the biodiversity of river Ganga. Thus, each Prahari shall work on the model of 'Each One Make Ten'.

### **Global Initiative on Academic Network (GIAN)**



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In a bid to make Indian cities more sustainable, the NITI Aayog has launched a new course on 'Urban Analytics – Evaluating and Measuring Sustainability of Cities' at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee.

The course was launched under Global Initiative on Academic Network (GIAN).

The course will provide an understanding and analysis on the urbanisation and its impacts that would help in evaluating the conditions of sustainability in Indian cities.

#### **What is GIAN program?**

Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) in Higher Education was launched in 2015. It is a program of Ministry of Human Resource and Development.

#### **Aim:**

GIAN aims at tapping the talent pool of scientists and entrepreneurs to engage with the institutes of higher education in India to augment the country's existing academic resources, accelerate the pace of quality reforms, and further strengthen India's scientific and technological capabilities.

GIAN is envisaged to achieve the following objectives:

- To increase the footfalls of reputed international faculty in the Indian academic institutes.
- Provide opportunity to our faculty to learn and share knowledge and teaching skills in cutting edge areas.
- To provide opportunity to our students to seek knowledge and experience from reputed International faculty.
- To create avenue for possible collaborative research with the international faculty.
- Develop high quality course material in niche areas, both through video and print that can be used by a larger body of students and teachers.
- To document and develop new pedagogic methods in emerging topics of national and international interest.



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### **Way ahead:**

India is the global host of the World Environment Day 2018, where the focus is on Sustainability and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals including SDG 11 which has a goal to "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

Now, it is the responsibility of all the stakeholders involved to achieve this goal in a timely manner.

### **Article 35A**

#### **Why in News?**

The Centre has decided not to file any "counter-affidavit" on Article 35A, which has been challenged in the Supreme Court through a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) petition. The Supreme Court has scheduled further hearing for August 6.

#### **What you need to know about Article 35A?**

Article 35A is a provision in the Constitution that empowers the Jammu and Kashmir legislature to define permanent residents of the state. It was added through the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954, issued under Article 370.

Article 35A empowers Jammu and Kashmir legislature to define "permanent residents" of the state along with their special rights and privileges. This Article has an intricate relationship with Article 370.

#### **WHO ARE PERMANENT RESIDENTS?**

Jammu and Kashmir Assembly defined Permanent Resident as a person who was a state subject on May 14, 1954 or who had been a resident of the state for 10 years and has "lawfully acquired immovable property in the state."

A person who is not a permanent resident of Jammu and Kashmir is not allowed to buy or own properties in the state or vote in state Assembly election or contest election to the state Assembly.



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An outsider cannot get a job in the Jammu and Kashmir government.

### **Arguments against Article 35A:**

The petition says Article 35 A is against the “very spirit of oneness of India” as it creates a “class within a class of Indian citizens”.

Restricting citizens from other States from getting employment or buying property within Jammu and Kashmir is a violation of fundamental rights under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution.

Also, the parliamentary route of lawmaking was bypassed when the President incorporated Article 35A into the Constitution. Article 368 (i) of the Constitution empowers only Parliament to amend the Constitution.

### **What’s the case now?**

Attempts to undo Article 35A of the Indian Constitution would strike a fatal blow to the nationalists in the state. Kashmiris are apprehensive that such a move would open the sluice gates for a demographic transformation of the Valley. The J&K government is also concerned at the reluctance of the Union government to file a counter affidavit in the Supreme Court. Against the backdrop of the escalating protests in Kashmir, this issue could potentially be explosive.

## **Geo-Intelligence Asia – 2018**

### **Why in News?**

The Eleventh edition of GeoIntelligence Asia 2018 is being held in New Delhi.

It is organised by GeoSpatial Media and Communication with Directorate General of Information System as Knowledge Partners and Military Survey as Co-organisers.



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**Aim of the seminar:** The seminar brings together the military, security officials including BSF and Police Forces, Government and industry together to examine the latest technology solutions and on the critical role of geospatial technology in military and security applications.

Theme: 'GeoSpatial: A Force Multiplier for Defence and Industrial Security'.

Geospatial Intelligence and its significance:

- Geospatial intelligence is a critical foundation for many aspects of defense and internal security. It offers the capability of monitoring, predicting and countering threats, while helping strategize and support various field operations.
- It facilitates multi-source information sharing and integration across agencies and organizations by providing a common framework on which other information is based.
- The use of big data, advanced geospatial analytics software and sophisticated imaging technologies from (very) high-resolution remote sensing satellites, UAVs and other sensors, enables seamless flow of information in pre-, real-time and post-combat operations.
- Real-time views and insights of impacted regions are key to improving emergency response times, especially in vulnerable areas such as a country's border.
- Geospatial data is invaluable to the border security operations, to deliver accurate situational awareness information, enabling quick and secure decision-making, while mitigating risks, and increasing national security.

### **IBSA summit**

2018 IBSA Ministerial meet was recently held in Pretoria, South Africa.

The outcome of this meeting was a document titled IBSA Declaration on South-South Cooperation. This document calls for contribution of each of the



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member of IBSA forum to contribute to greater understanding of development cooperation as a common endeavour of the global south.

### **About IBSA forum:**

The establishment of IBSA was formalised by the Brasilia Declaration of 6 June 2003. IBSA is a coordinating mechanism amongst three emerging countries, three multi ethnic and multicultural democracies, which are determined to:

- Contribute to the construction of a new international architecture.
- Bring their voice together on global issues.
- Deepen their ties in various areas.

### **Significance of the platform:**

The success of IBSA reflects an important demonstration effect.

It demonstrates, most vividly, the desirability and feasibility of South-South cooperation beyond the conventional areas of exchange of experts and training. IBSA success in contributing to discourse on global issues also shows the importance of engaging with the countries of the South.

### **Fortified rice**

The government is planning to provide fortified rice (enriched with essential vitamins and minerals) to all the poor under National Food Security Act (NFSA) across the country, which would cost about Rs 12,000 to Rs 14,000 crore annually. To begin with the scheme is likely to cover the 115 'aspirational' districts across the country.

The proposal is being prepared with the support of Niti Aayog under the National Nutrition Mission.

### **What is Rice Fortification?**



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

Rice fortification is the practice of increasing the content of essential micronutrients in rice and to improve the nutritional quality of the rice.

#### **Why Rice Fortification?**

- Rice is the world's most important staple food. An estimated 2 billion people eat rice every day, forming the mainstay of diets across large of Asia and Africa.
- Historians have found evidence of rice being eaten in parts of china some 8,000 years ago and it even has the same word as "food" in Chinese. In Bangladesh, home of 160 million people, rice is the main stable food with a daily average consumption of 416 grams per capita.
- Regular milled rice is low in micronutrients and serves primarily as a source of carbohydrate only. The fortification of rice is a major opportunity to improve nutrition.
- Fortified rice are contains Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B12, Folic Acid, Iron and Zinc.

#### **Food fortification in India:**

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has formulated a comprehensive regulation on fortification of foods namely 'Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016'.

These regulations set the standards for food fortification and encourage the production, manufacture, distribution, sale and consumption of fortified foods. The regulations also provide for specific role of FSSAI in promotion for food fortification and to make fortification mandatory.



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This sets the premise for the national summit on fortification of food.

### **Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY)**

The World Bank has approved Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY). The scheme is to be implemented over a period of five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23, with World Bank assistance.

### **About Atal Bhujal Yojana:**

It is a Rs.6000 crore Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. The scheme aims to improve ground water management in priority areas in the country through community participation.

### **Priority areas:**

The priority areas identified under the scheme fall in the states of Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

These States represent about 25% of the total number of over-exploited, critical and semi-critical blocks in terms of ground water in India. They also cover two major types of groundwater systems found in India – alluvial and hard rock aquifers- and have varying degrees of institutional readiness and experience in groundwater management.

### **Implementation of the scheme:**

Funds under the scheme will be provided to the states for strengthening the institutions responsible for ground water governance, as well as for encouraging community involvement for improving ground water management to foster behavioural changes that promote conservation and efficient use of water.



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The scheme will also facilitate convergence of ongoing Government schemes in the states by incentivizing their focussed implementation in identified priority areas.

#### **Expected outcomes:**

The implementation of the scheme is expected to have several positive outcomes like better understanding of the ground water regime, focused and integrated community based approach for addressing issues related to ground water depletion, sustainable ground water management through convergence of on-going and new schemes, adoption of efficient water use practices to reduce ground water use for irrigation and augmentation of ground water resources in targeted areas.

#### **Status of groundwater in India:**

Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) is regulating ground water development in 23 States/UTs. As per the assessment of dynamic ground water resources of country carried out jointly by CGWB and State Ground Water Departments, out of the total 6584 numbers of assessment units (Block/ Taluks/ Mandals/ watershed/ Firkka), 1034 units have been categorized as 'Over-exploited'. This may be due to increase in population, rapid urbanization & industrialization and other related factors.

#### **Public credit registry**

#### **Why in News?**

To provide a single-point and real-time source for financial liabilities of a person or entity, the Reserve Bank of India has decided to set up a public credit registry (PCR) in a modular and phased manner.



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The decision is based on the report of RBI appointed task force led by YM Deosthalee.

### **About PCR**

The PCR will be the single point of mandatory reporting for all material events for each loan, notwithstanding any threshold in the loan amount or type of borrower.

The PCR will serve as a registry of all credit contracts, duly verified by reporting institutions, for all lending in India and any lending by an Indian institution to a company incorporated in India.

Benefits of having a PCR:

- A PCR can potentially help banks in credit assessment and pricing of credit as well as in making risk-based, dynamic and counter-cyclical provisioning.
- The PCR can also help the RBI in understanding if transmission of monetary policy is working, and if not, where are the bottlenecks.
- Further, it can help supervisors, regulators and banks in early intervention and effective restructuring of stressed bank credits.
- A PCR will also help banks and regulators as credit information is a 'public good' and its utility is to the credit market at large and to society in general.

### **Global Peace Index 2018**

### **Why in News?**



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Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), world's leading think tank that develops metrics to analyse peace and quantify its economic value, has released the 12th edition of the Global Peace Index (GPI), or measure of global peacefulness.

Performance of India:

- India has moved up four places to the 137th rank among 163 countries. The improvement is due to a reduction in the level of violent crime driven by increased law enforcement. India was ranked 141 last year.
- India was also among the countries with the biggest decreases in the number of deaths, along with Sri Lanka, Chad, Colombia, and Uganda.

### **Small finance banks**

#### **Why in News?**

The Reserve Bank of India has decided to allow urban co-operative banks (UCB) to convert into small finance banks (SFB), a move aimed at bringing these entities into mainstream banking. It has been decided to allow voluntary transition of UCBs meeting the prescribed criteria into SFBs.

#### **Significance of this move:**

UCBs currently face regulation by both the RBI and the respective State governments. By turning into SFBs, they will be regulated only by the RBI.

#### **What are small finance banks?**

The small finance bank will primarily undertake basic banking activities of acceptance of deposits and lending to unserved and underserved sections



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including small business units, small and marginal farmers, micro and small industries and unorganised sector entities.

#### **What they can do?**

- Take small deposits and disburse loans.
- Distribute mutual funds, insurance products and other simple third-party financial products.
- Lend 75% of their total adjusted net bank credit to priority sector.
- Maximum loan size would be 10% of capital funds to single borrower, 15% to a group.
- Minimum 50% of loans should be up to 25 lakhs.

#### **What they cannot do?**

- Lend to big corporates and groups.
- Cannot open branches with prior RBI approval for first five years.
- Other financial activities of the promoter must not mingle with the bank.
- It cannot set up subsidiaries to undertake non-banking financial services activities.
- Cannot be a business correspondent of any bank.

#### **Outer space Treaty**

#### **Why in News?**

The Union Cabinet was recently apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India represented by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and Oman represented by the Ministry of Transport and Communications on Cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, in February, 2018 at Muscat (Oman's port capital).



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- This MoU shall enable the following areas of cooperation such as, space science, technology and applications including remote sensing of the earth; satellite based navigation; Space science and planetary exploration; use of spacecraft and space systems and ground system; and application of space technology.

### **Inter-Linking of Rivers**

#### **Why in News?**

The Union Cabinet was recently apprised of the progress report of Special Committee for Inter-Linking of Rivers.

The progress report on interlinking of rivers has been submitted to the Cabinet in compliance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court judgement.

The court had directed the Union Government of India to constitute a Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers.

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#### **Need for interlinking of rivers:**

The interlinking project aims to link India's rivers by a network of reservoirs and canals that will allow for their water capacities to be shared and redistributed.

According to some experts, this is an engineered panacea that will reduce persistent floods in some parts and water shortages in other parts besides facilitating the generation of hydroelectricity for an increasingly power hungry country.

#### **Benefits associated:**

Redistribution:



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India receives most of its rain during monsoon season from June to September, most of it falls in northern and eastern part of India, the amount of rainfall in southern and western part are comparatively low. It will be these places which will have shortage of water. Interlinking of rivers will help these areas to have water throughout the year.

**Boost to agriculture:** The main occupation of rural India is agriculture and if monsoon fails in a year, then agricultural activities come to a standstill and this will aggravate rural poverty. Interlinking of rivers will be a practical solution for this problem, because the water can be stored or water can be transferred from water surplus area to deficit.

**Disaster mitigation:** The Ganga Basin, Brahmaputra basin sees floods almost every year. In order to avoid this, the water from these areas has to be diverted to other areas where there is scarcity of water. This can be achieved by linking the rivers. There is a two way advantage with this – floods will be controlled and scarcity of water will be reduced.

**Transportation:** Interlinking of rivers will also have commercial importance on a longer run. This can be used as inland waterways and which helps in faster movement of goods from one place to other.

**Employment generation:** Interlinking also creates a new occupation for people living in and around these canals and it can be the main areas of fishing in India.

#### **Concerns associated:**

- Interlinking of rivers will cause huge amount of distortion in the existing environment. In order to create canals and reservoirs, there will be mass deforestation. This will have impact on rains and in turn affect the whole cycle of life.
- Usually rivers change their course and direction in about 100 years and if this happens after interlinking, then the project will not be feasible for a longer run.



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- Due to interlinking of rivers, there will be decrease in the amount of fresh water entering seas and this will cause a serious threat to the marine life system and will be a major ecological disaster.
- Due to the creation of Canals and Reservoirs, huge amount of area which is occupied by the people will be submerged leading to displacement of people and government will have to spend more to rehabilitate these people.
- The amount required for these projects is so huge that government will have to take loans from the foreign sources which would increase the burden on the government and country will fall in a debt trap.

### **Swachh Bharat Mission**

#### **Why in News?**

Sanitation coverage in rural India, under the Swachh Bharat Mission, has now risen to 85%. As per the data released by Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, through mobilisation of rural communities, 7.4 crore toilets were built across rural India, and as an outcome, over 3.8 lakh villages and 391 districts were declared Open Defecation Free (ODF).

#### **About Swachh Bharat Mission- Gramin:**

- The Swachh Bharat Mission is the first sanitation programme in the country to measure outcomes (ODF) instead of output (toilets) alone.
- The aim of Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) is to achieve a clean and Open Defecation Free (ODF) India by 2nd October, 2019.

#### **Objectives:**

- To bring about an improvement in the general quality of life in the rural areas, by promoting cleanliness, hygiene and eliminating open defecation.



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- To accelerate sanitation coverage in rural areas to achieve the vision of Swachh Bharat by 2nd October 2019.
- To motivate communities to adopt sustainable sanitation practices and facilities through awareness creation and health education.
- To encourage cost effective and appropriate technologies for ecologically safe and sustainable sanitation.
- To develop, wherever required, community managed sanitation systems focusing on scientific Solid & Liquid Waste Management systems for overall cleanliness in the rural areas.
- To create significant positive impact on gender and promote social inclusion by improving sanitation especially in marginalized communities.

### **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gramin Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY)**

#### **Why in News?**

Ministry of Shipping in association with Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gramin Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY), Ministry of Rural Development recently conducted a workshop on "Skill Development in the Port and Maritime Sector".

#### **Significance:**

India is one of the leading suppliers of seafarers in the world and now want to be the leading supplier for all talent in the Port and Maritime sector. Skill Development in the Port & Maritime sector is an opportunity to improve India's coastal areas, usher in port led prosperity and provide the world with skilled youth.

#### **About DDU GKY:**

- The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) announced the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) Antyodaya Diwas,



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on 25th September 2014. DDU-GKY is a part of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), tasked with the dual objectives of adding diversity to the incomes of rural poor families and cater to the career aspirations of rural youth.

- DDU-GKY is uniquely focused on rural youth between the ages of 15 and 35 years from poor families. As a part of the Skill India campaign, it plays an instrumental role in supporting the social and economic programs of the government like the Make In India, Digital India, Smart Cities and Start-Up India, Stand-Up India campaigns.

In order to ensure complete social and regional inclusion the following special schemes have been launched:

- Himayat: A special scheme for the youth (rural & urban) of Jammu & Kashmir.
- Roshni: A special initiative for the rural youth of poor families in 27 Left-wing Extremist (LWE) districts across 9 states.

### **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM)**

#### **Why in News?**

Ministry of Rural Development recently conferred National Awards on Best Performing Self Help Groups under DAY – National Rural Livelihood Mission.

#### **National awards:**

Conferring awards to best performing SHG and Village Organizations was initiated by DAY-NRLM in 2016-17.



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The National Awards to the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are intended to provide public recognition to the outstanding performance of the community institutions and incorporate a sense of pride among the poor community members.

### **Significance of SHGs:**

The SHGs are a perfect example of how livelihoods of households can transform through a collective approach, managed in line with core democratic and financial principles.

The SHG has contributed to several community level activities for the common good. These include awareness promotion for constructing household toilets using SBM funds, environmental sanitation, liquid waste management and support for maintenance of village commons. SHG has demonstrated strong features of a progressive community based institution.

### **About Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana:**

Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India in June 2011.

The Mission aims at creating efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor enabling them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services.

### **UN Security Council**

#### **Why in News?**

The UN General Assembly has elected Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa to serve as non-permanent members on the Security Council for two years starting in January.



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The five new members will replace Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands and Sweden on the council.

#### **Selection of members:**

There are 15 members on the UN Security Council, including the five permanent ones — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — and 10 non-permanent members, half of which are elected each year. Each candidate country needed to secure two thirds of the votes in order to clinch a seat.

#### **About UNSC:**

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the organs of the United Nations and is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.
- Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions; it is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.

#### **Members:**

- The Security Council consists of fifteen members. Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the United States—serve as the body's five permanent members. These permanent members can veto any substantive Security Council resolution, including those on the admission of new member states or candidates for Secretary-General.
- The Security Council also has 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve two-year terms. The body's presidency rotates monthly among its members.

#### **Proposed reforms:**



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Reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) encompasses five key issues: categories of membership, the question of the veto held by the five permanent members, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council and its working methods, and the Security Council-General Assembly relationship. There is also a proposal to admit more permanent members.

#### **Why India should be given a permanent seat in the council?**

- India was among the founding members of United Nations.
- It is the second largest and a one of the largest constant contributor of troops to United Nations Peacekeeping missions.
- Today, India has over 8,500 peacekeepers in the field, more than twice as many as the UN's five big powers combined.
- India, since long time, has been demanding expansion of UNSC and its inclusion as permanent member in it. It has been a member of UNSC for 7 terms and a member of G-77 and G-4, so permanent membership is a logical extension.

#### **G7 bloc**

44th annual G7 Summit is being held in Quebec, Canada.

#### **What is G7 Summit?**

G7 Summit is an event conducted annually where world leaders from seven powerful economies of the world, US, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Japan and Italy come together to discuss burning issues happening around the globe. They, by mutual understanding, also form policies or figure out remedies for the concerned issue.



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### **What is the 44th G7 Summit all about?**

Every year few international issues which need to be tackled are taken into account and policies are formed around them. Canada has put forward the following 5 themes for this year's summit:

- Investing in growth that works for everyone.
- Preparing for jobs of the future.
- Working together on climate change, oceans and clean energy.
- Building a more peaceful and secure world.
- Advancing gender equality and impacting women's empowerment.

### **Uranium contamination**

#### **Why in News?**

Scientists have found widespread uranium contamination in groundwater from aquifers across 16 states in India, much above the WHO provisional standard for the country. The main source of uranium contamination was "natural," but human factors such as groundwater table decline and nitrate pollution could be worsening the problem.

#### **WHO prescribed limit:**

The WHO has set a provisional safe drinking water standard of 30 micrograms of uranium per litre, a level that is consistent with the U.S. EPA standards. However, uranium is not yet included in the list of contaminants monitored under the Bureau of Indian Standards' Drinking Water Specifications.

#### **Main factors responsible for uranium contamination:**

- When over-pumping of aquifers' groundwater occurs and their water levels decline, it induces oxidation conditions that, in turn, enhance uranium enrichment in the shallow groundwater that remains.



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- While the primary source of uranium is geogenic (naturally occurring), anthropogenic (human caused) factors such as groundwater table decline and nitrate pollution may further enhance uranium mobilisation.
- Other factors include the amount of uranium contained in an aquifer's rocks; water-rock interactions that cause the uranium to be extracted from those rocks; oxidation conditions that enhance the extracted uranium's solubility in water; and the interaction of the extracted uranium with other chemicals in the groundwater, such as bicarbonate, which can further enhance its solubility.

### **What needs to be done?**

- There is a need for revision of the current water quality monitoring program in India, evaluation of human health risks in areas of high uranium prevalence, development of adequate remediation technologies, and, above all, implementation of preventive management practices to address this problem.
- Including a uranium standard in the Bureau of Indian Standards' Drinking Water Specification based on uranium's kidney-harming effects, establishing monitoring systems to identify at-risk areas, and exploring new ways to prevent or treat uranium contamination will help ensure access to safe drinking water for tens of millions in India.