GS-2

Shehri Samridhi Utsav

Why in news?

Shri Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs, has informed that a fortnight of events named **'Shehri Samridhi Utsav',** focusing on urban livelihoods is being organised by his Ministry, from 1st -15th February 2019.

Aim of Utsav:

The event aims at extending the outreach of National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) to the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable, showcase its initiatives and facilitate access of SHG members to the other government schemes.

Other Past Initiatives:

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana DAY-NULM addresses multiple dimensions of urban poverty by developing strong community-based organizations, providing placement oriented skill training, providing subsidized loans for self-employment ventures, supporting street vendors' livelihoods and establishing shelter for the homeless.

Mission has made significant progress on all these fronts –

   a. Over 34 lakh urban poor women have been organized into Self Help Groups and their federations.
   b. Over 8.9 lakh candidates have been skill trained and certified with over 4.6 lakh provided placement,
   c. Over 8.5 lakh individuals and groups have been supported to access subsidized loans.
   d. 1,098 shelters have been made functional creating capacity for more than 60,000 urban homeless.
   e. 16 lakh street vendors have been identified through survey in 2,430 cities and half of them have been given identity cards.

National Level Events will have the following components -

- During Shehri Samridhi Utsav, a National Workshop will be organized on sanitation-based livelihoods with active participation from the States, ULBs, and federations of SHGs from across the country, wherein the Swachhata Excellence Awards would be distributed.
- A National Conference on Street Vending will also be held to discuss issues and seek a way forward to support livelihoods of street vendors.
- National Exhibition cum sale of SHG products is being organized in New Delhi from 8th – 17th Feb 2019 along with a National Street Food Festival which will start on 14th Feb.
- These events will give a prominent platform and exposure to women microentrepreneurs and food vendors from all over the country.

Loan Agreements on Japan's Official Development Assistance to India

What is it?

The Loan Agreements were signed here today in New Delhi between the Government of India and JICA, New Delhi under Japanese Official Development Assistance Loan Program.

What is it for?

(i) Project for the Construction of Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (Phase 1) for JPY 40.074 billion (Rs.2470 Crore approx.), and

(ii) Program for Japan-India Cooperative Actions towards Sustainable Development Goals in India for JPY 15.000 billion (Rs.950 Crore approx.).

Objectives of Programme:

- The Project for the Construction of Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (Phase 1) aims to meet increasing traffic demands in Chennai metropolitan area by constructing the Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (Section 1) and installing Intelligent Transport Systems, thereby contributing to mitigation of Traffic Congestion and promoting Regional Economic Development.
- The Program for Japan-India Cooperative Actions towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India aims to contribute to promotion of SDGs in India especially in social development by supporting the efforts by

the Government of India to strengthen the Policy Framework and Implementation Mechanism, thereby supporting India in achieving SDGs by 2030.

Background:

- India and Japan have had a long and fruitful history of Bilateral Development Cooperation since 1958.
- In the last few years, the Economic Cooperation between India and Japan has steadily progressed.
- This further consolidates and strengthens the Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan.

About JICA:

- The **Japan International Cooperation Agency** is a governmental agency that coordinates official development assistance (ODA) for the government of Japan.
- It is chartered with assisting economic and social growth in developing countries, and the promotion of international cooperation.
- In October, 2003, Sadako Ogata, former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, became the President.
- It has been led by Professor Shinichi Kitaoka, the former President of the International University of Japan.

7th ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers meeting

Why in News?

The Union Minister for Tourism, Shri. K. J. Alphons attended the Seventh Meeting of Tourism Ministers of ASEAN and India held in Ha Long City, Viet Nam today.

Shri. K J Alphons co-chaired the Tourism Ministers' meeting with the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam, Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thien.

Outcome of Meet:

- The Ministers' meeting noted the strengthened tourism performance of ASEAN and India in 2018 with preliminary numbers of **139.5 million tourist arrivals to ASEAN and India in the year with an increase of   7.4 per cent as compared to the previous year**.

- As a follow up to the Summit, the Ministers launched the **ASEAN-India Tourism Cooperation Year 2019**, and looked forward to enhancing cooperation with a view to increasing two-way tourist visits and promoting greater people-to-people exchanges between ASEAN and India.

- Earlier, during the ASEAN - India Commemorative Summit in January 2018, the Prime Minister of India had proposed designating the year 2019 as ASEAN-India Tourism Year.

- This was also discussed during the 20th ASEAN-India Tourism Working Group meeting in Thailand, and it was decided to prepare a calendar of activities commemorating the ASEAN - India Year of Tourism.

- The Ministry of Tourism has prepared and shared a calendar including various events for celebrating tourism year.

About ASEAN:

- The **Association of Southeast Asian Nations**   is a regional intergovernmental organization comprising ten countries in Southeast Asia, which promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic, political, security, military, educational, and sociocultural integration among its members and other countries in Asia.

- It also regularly engages other countries in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

- ASEAN maintains a global network of alliances and dialogue partners and is considered by some as global powerhouse, the central union for cooperation in Asia-Pacific, and a prominent and influential organisation.

- It is involved in numerous international affairs, and hosts diplomatic missions throughout the world.

- It is a major partner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, developing cooperation model with the organisation for the peace, stability, development and sustainability of Asia.

GS-3

India's Ranking in AI Research:

Why in News?

India ranks third in the world in terms of high quality research publications in artificial intelligence (AI) but is at a significant distance from world leader China, according to an analysis by research agency Itihaasa, which was founded by Kris Gopalakrishnan, former CEO and co-founder of Infosys.

Basis of Ranking:

- The agency computed the number of 'citable documents'— the number of research publications in peer-reviewed journals — in the field of AI between 2013-2017 as listed out by Scimago, a compendium that tracks trends in scientific research publications.

Analysis of Report:

- India, while third in the world with 12,135 documents, trailed behind China with 37, 918 documents and the United States with 32,421 documents.
- However, when parsed by another metric 'citations'— or the number of times an article is referenced — India ranked only fifth and trailed the United Kingdom, Canada, the U.S. and China. "

- This suggests that India must work at improving the quality of its research output in AI,.
- Given India's traditional strength in information technology and AI said to pose a transformation in industry and academic circles, the report was an attempt at mapping the state of AI-based research in India.

Importance of AI for India:

- Healthcare, financial services, monsoon forecasting, retail and education were the key fields likely to benefit from AI and the field was "unlikely to lead" to a destruction of jobs — a key global concern regarding the field.
- India's national think-tank, the NITI Ayog, last June released a discussion paper on the transformative potential of AI in India that said the country could add $1 trillion to its economy through integrating AI into its economy.

Saturn's Ring:

Why in News?

Saturn's rings are one of our solar system's magnificent sights, but may be a relatively recent addition, according to data obtained from NASA's Cassini spacecraft before the robotic explorer's 2017 death plunge into the giant gas planet.

Observations Made:

- Scientists said that a calculation of the mass of the rings based on gravitational measurements of the planet collected by Cassini indicated they formed between 100 million and 10 million years ago in roughly the final 2% of Saturn's current age.
- The findings challenge the notion favoured by some astronomers that the rings developed soon after Saturn formed about 4.5 billion years ago along with the other planets, including the earth.
- Others felt the rings were much younger, but lacked crucial data like their mass to estimate their age reliably.

- The ring mass turned out to be 45% lower than previous estimates based on 1980s data from NASA's Voyager spacecraft. Lower mass indicates a younger age, the researchers said in a study published in *Science*.

How did it form?

- Scientists suspect the rings formed perhaps when a large icy comet or moon ventured too close to Saturn and was shattered by gravitational forces or moons collided in orbit.
- Scientists hope that they can, in the future, get samples of ring material to find the precise date of origin.