



C.A Dated On 01-02-2019

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Swachh Bharat Mission

Why in News?

The Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBMG) of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, held a National Workshop on Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) on 30th and 31st January 2019 in New Delhi.

About the Workshop:

- The workshop emphasized the importance of Fecal Sludge Management (FSM) for rural census towns and large dense villages and Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resource–dhan (GOBAR-DHAN) in rural areas.
- It also covered Plastic Waste Management, Grey Water Management and featured case studies from across the country.
- The experts on FSM shared various technological and operational models, specific to different geographic terrains and climatic conditions.
- Innovative Solid Waste Management initiatives from across the country were shared by the States.
- This included transforming waste into construction bricks and fuel during the harsh winters in Leh district in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Kerala showcased the “Green Protocol” being implemented in Thiruvananthapuram district using the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) to minimize waste generation.
- Rajgarh district from Madhya Pradesh presented the experience of successfully implementing the GOBAR-DHAN project.

About GOBAR-DHAN Yojana:

- In an effort to make the villages open defecation free and improve the lives of villagers, the Finance Minister in his budget speech in Feb 2018 announced the launch of Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBAR-DHAN) scheme.
- Currently cattle dung and a portion of agricultural waste is used as cooking fuel.
- However, WHO estimates about 5 lakh deaths in India alone due to indoor air pollution caused by unclean cooking fuel.

Benefits of Scheme:



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- Women and children suffer the most, as they spend large amounts of their time near indoor cooking hearth.
- Bio-gas, the most common form of bio-fuel, is a clean form of energy and can be obtained from cattle dung, poultry droppings, crop residue, kitchen waste, etc.
- Gobar-Dhan shall benefit rural people in general and women in particular from this clean fuel and also through improvements on health and improvement in cleanliness in the villages.
- This initiative shall support biodegradable waste recovery and conversion of waste into resources.
- This shall provide economic and resource benefits to farmers and households and also support creating clean villages which is the objective of Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin).

INF Agreement:

Why in News?

The United States will stop complying with a landmark nuclear pact with Russia as soon as this weekend after last-ditch talks with Moscow to save it fell flat.

Background:

- Washington has long accused Russia of flouting the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), alleging that a new Russian missile, the Novator 9M729, called the SSC-8 by NATO, violates the pact, which bans either side from stationing short- and intermediate-range, land-based missiles in Europe.
- Russia denies that, saying that the missile's range puts it outside the treaty, and has accused the U.S. of inventing a false pretext to exit a treaty Washington wants to leave anyway so as to develop new missiles.
- It has also rejected a U.S. demand to destroy the new missile.

About INF:

- The **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty, formally Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles)** is a 1987 [arms](#)



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[control](#) agreement between the [United States](#) and the [Soviet Union](#) (and later its [successor state](#) the [Russian Federation](#)).

- Signed in [Washington, D.C.](#) by [President Ronald Reagan](#) and [General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev](#) on 8 December 1987, the treaty was ratified by the [United States Senate](#) on 27 May 1988 and came into force on 1 June 1988.
- The INF Treaty eliminated all nuclear and conventional missiles, as well as their launchers, with ranges of 500–1,000 kilometers (310–620 mi) (short-range) and 1,000–5,500 km (620–3,420 mi) (intermediate-range).
- The treaty did not cover sea-launched missiles.
- By May 1991, 2,692 missiles were eliminated, followed by 10 years of on-site verification inspections

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Project 75(I) submarines

Why in News?

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), in a landmark decision today, also approved indigenous construction of six submarines for the Indian Navy at a cost of over Rs. 40,000 crores.

About the Project:

- This is the second project under the MoD's ambitious Strategic Partnership (SP) model that aims at providing a significant fillip to the Government's 'Make in India' programme.
- SP model envisages indigenous manufacturing of major defence platforms by an Indian Strategic Partner, who will collaborate with foreign OEM to set up production facilities in the country.
- The model has a long term vision of promoting India as a manufacturing hub for defence equipment through transfer of niche technologies and higher Indigenous Content thereby enhancing self-sufficiency for meeting the future requirements of the Armed Forces.

Background:



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- Today's DAC approval would be second such project following indigenous production of 111 Naval Utility Helicopters that was approved in August 2018.
- Construction of six submarines under Project 75(I) will provide a major boost to the existing submarine design and manufacturing eco-system in India through transfer of design and equipment technology as well as necessary skill sets.
- The DAC also approved the acquisition of approximately 5000 Milan Anti Tank Guided Missiles for the Army.

PETROTECH-2019

Context:

PETROTECH-2019, the 13th International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition, being organised under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, is all set to be inaugurated on February 10, 2019.

Background:

- India's flagship hydrocarbon international conference is expected to be inaugurated by Prime Minister of India.
- Over 95 Energy Ministers from partner countries have been invited by the Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas to participate in the Conference.
- The three-day mega event will showcase the recent market and investor friendly developments that have taken place in the India's oil and gas sector.
- It is expected to see participation of over 86 eminent speakers and 7000 delegates from around 70 countries, including technologists, scientists, planners, policy-makers, management experts, entrepreneurs, service-providers and vendors.

Focus of Event:

The PETROTECH 2019 exhibition will focus on development in technologies for exploration & production, process control, refining and pipeline and services, systems, products, oil field hardware, software, analytical instruments, Renewable, R&D, HSE, training and publications of technical literature.



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NSSO Unemployment Report:

The National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) data showing a record spike in unemployment in 2017-18, which was published in a news report on Thursday, is a validation of trends seen on the ground, according to [labour](#) economists, job-seekers and workers' representatives.

Salient Observations of Report:

- The NSSO findings are not surprising, but they are alarming.
- The trends of rising unemployment were already visible.
- The data, as cited by the news report, shows that there has been a rise in unemployment and a decline in the labour force participation rate (LFPR) post demonetisation.
- The LFPR is a measure of people looking for jobs.
- So, if this is declining while unemployment is growing, it means that there is a very real and serious crisis in jobs.
- Thursday's *Business Standard* report on the NSSO report said overall unemployment was at a 45-year high, with youth between the ages of 15 and 29 facing higher rates of joblessness than others.

Data about Informal Sector:

- The informal sector employs more than 90% of the country's workforce, and has witnessed a decline in available work and wages in the last two year.
- Daily wage labourers say they used to get at least 20 days of work each month.
- After demonetisation, they get only ten days.

Glacier Melt:

Why in News?



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NASA scientists have discovered a gigantic cavity, almost 300 metres tall, growing at the bottom of the Thwaites Glacier in West Antarctica, indicating rapid decay of the ice sheet and acceleration in global sea levels due to [climate change](#).

The findings, published in the journal *Science Advances*, highlight the need for detailed observations of Antarctic glaciers' undersides in calculating how fast sea levels will rise in response to warming.

Details of Research:

- Researchers expected to find some gaps between ice and bedrock at Thwaites' bottom where ocean water could flow in and melt the glacier from below, NASA said in a statement.
- The size and explosive growth rate of the newfound hole, however, surprised them.
- It is big enough to have contained 14 billion tonnes of ice, and most of that ice melted over the last three years.

How was Observation Made?

- The cavity was revealed by ice-penetrating radar in NASA's Operation IceBridge, an airborne campaign beginning in 2010 that studies connections between the polar regions and the global climate.
- The researchers also used data from a constellation of Italian and German space-borne synthetic aperture radars.
- These very high-resolution data can be processed by a technique called radar interferometry to reveal how the ground surface below has moved between images.

Significance:

- Thwaites Glacier is currently responsible for about 4% of global sea level rise, researchers said.
- It holds enough ice to raise the world ocean a little over 65 centimetres and backstops neighbouring glaciers that would raise sea levels an additional 2.4 metres if all the ice were lost.
- Even with this accelerating retreat, however, melt rates on this side of the glacier are lower than on the western side, they said.



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