



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 14-June-2019

GS-2

Employees' State Insurance (ESI) Act:

Why in News?

Starting July 1, both employer's and employee's contribution under the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) Act, which gives insured workers medical benefits among other facilities, would be reduced, the Centre said on Thursday.

Details:

- The total contribution towards ESI was reduced from 6.5% of an employee's wages to 4%, with the employer's share cut to 3.25%, from 4.75%, and the employee's contribution lowered to 0.75% of wages, from 1.75%, the government announced.

Significance:

- This would benefit 3.6 crore employees and 12.85 lakh employers," the Labour and Employment Ministry said in a statement. "
- The reduced rate of contribution will bring about a substantial relief to workers under the ESI scheme and bring more and more workforce into the formal sector," it added.
- The financial liability on employers would also be reduced, leading to improved viability of the establishments, increased ease of doing business and likely improved compliance with the Act, the government said, adding that the current rates had been in place since January 1, 1997.
- We will be able to ensure better compliance and encourage establishments to bring more people under the scheme.

Coverage of Scheme:

- The number of people insured under the scheme increased to 3.6 crore in 2018-2019, from 2.1 crore in 2015-2016, with the total contribution



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 14-June-2019

received climbing to ₹22,279 crore, from ₹11,455 crore, government data show.

- The number of employers in the scheme increased from 7.83 lakh in 2015-2016 to 8.98 lakh in 2016-2017, then to 10.33 lakh in 2017-2018 and to 12.85 lakh in 2018-2019.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit:

Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday met Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) [Summit](#) in Bishkek.

About the SCO?

- The SCO is a China-led 8-member economic and security bloc with India and Pakistan being admitted to the grouping in 2017.
- The **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**, or **Shanghai Pact**, is a [Eurasian political](#), [economic](#), and [security](#) alliance, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in [Shanghai, China](#) by the leaders of [China](#), [Kazakhstan](#), [Kyrgyzstan](#), [Russia](#), [Tajikistan](#), and [Uzbekistan](#); the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter, formally establishing the organisation, was signed in June 2002 and entered into force on 19 September 2003.
- The original five nations, with the exclusion of Uzbekistan, were previously members of the Shanghai Five group, founded on 26 April 1996. Since then, the organisation has expanded its membership to eight countries when [India](#) and [Pakistan](#) joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 at a [summit](#) in [Astana, Kazakhstan](#).

Working areas of Cooperation:

- The Heads of State Council (HSC) is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO, it meets once a year and adopts decisions and guidelines on all important matters of the organisation.
- Military exercises are also regularly conducted among members to promote cooperation and coordination against terrorism and other external threats, and to maintain regional peace and stability.
- Criticisms of the SCO include that it is used by member states to shield each other from international criticism regarding human rights violations.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 14-June-2019

- The SCO is widely regarded as the "alliance of the East", due to its growing centrality in [Asia-Pacific](#), and has been the primary security pillar of the region.
- It is the largest regional organisation in the world in terms of [geographical coverage](#) and [population](#), covering three-fifths of the [Eurasian continent](#) and nearly half of the human population.

Star of Jerusalem medal:

Why in News?

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has conferred an Indian national with the Star of Jerusalem medal, one of the highest honours given to foreign nationals by the Palestinian Authority.

Why was the award given?

- The Palestinian President said the Ansari family's presence in the old city of Jerusalem reflects the strong traditional ties between Indian and Palestinian people.
- Sheikh Munir Ansari is the Director of Indian Hospice, a unique and historic monument in the heart of the Holy city, which has become a symbol of India's heritage and presence in the old city of Jerusalem going back to over 800 years.
- The Indian hospice has been under the direct supervision of a representative from India since 1924.

Background:

- In the 12th century, Baba Farid, the famous sufi saint from Punjab visited Jerusalem on pilgrimage and prayed in seclusion for 40 days at the current site of the Hospice.
- It later became a pilgrimage site for Indian pilgrims visiting Jerusalem and was dedicated as a charitable waqf property in trust for a pious purpose.
- The place where Baba Farid is said to have prayed has become a major attraction for Indian tourists visiting Jerusalem.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 14-June-2019

- Almost every prominent Indian leader who has visited the region has paid a visit to the site and the hospice continues to host Indians visiting the Holy Land.
- The hospice also received a grant from the Ministry of External Affairs for its renovation.

GS-3

SBI Report on growth:

Context:

State Bank economists have opined that an easy monetary policy will be ineffective to push the sagging growth engine and that what is needed is more direct and quicker fiscal measures.

Details of Report:

- The financial system is “in need for some serious repair” and the government should use the forthcoming budget for the same.
- An easy monetary policy with a reasonable tight fiscal deficit will be ineffective in addressing the existing demand slowdown,” they said in a note on Wednesday.
- Support from the monetary policy — the RBI cut its key rates for the third time in 2019 and also changed the policy stance to accommodative last week to a nine-year low — is most welcome, the report said, underlining the need for help on the fiscal front.
- “Fiscal channel is more direct and quicker and financial system is in need of some serious repair,” the report said, adding “the government would do better with reasonable fiscal deficit assumptions and should be very clear of the fiscal consolidation path.”

Plummeting growth:

- Growth plummeted to a nearly five-year low at 5.8% for the March quarter, pulling down the full-year GDP for FY19 to a low 6.8%.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 14-June-2019

- Questions have also been asked about the growth numbers by Former Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramaniam, who said the growth numbers during the Modi government's first innings till FY17 had been inflated by a whopping 2.5 percentage points.
- The ongoing crisis in the non-banking finance companies, which constitute up to a fifth of the overall lending in the economy, according to some watchers, needs immediate attention to revive the fortunes of the financial system.
- The note warned there were some "limiting factors" like the Food Corporation's massive borrowings from the National Small Savings Funds, which is already in excess of ₹2 lakh crore or 1 percent of GDP.

Black-crested Bulbul

Why in News?

The black-crested Bulbul was spotted after several years in Dudhwa as the counting of birds during summer season was held last week.

Details:

- Experts from Katarniaghat Foundation, Ruhelkhand Nature Club and WWF-India apart from Dudhwa nature guides visited a number of locations inside Dudhwa National Park and Kishanpur wildlife sanctuary.
- The experts photographed the winged species and recorded their data."
- The data collected by counting teams would be compiled and analysed in next few days to ascertain the number of bird species found in Dudhwa.

About the Bird:

- The black-crested Bulbul is a bird species with a black head and deep yellow body.
- The sighting of black-crested Bulbul after several years has come as a great joy for the authorities and bird lovers.

New species of birds:



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 14-June-2019

- Notably enough, during the winter bird-count, the experts had sighted five new species of birds in Dudhwa which included Maroon Oriole, Eurasian sparrow hawk and short-eared eagle owl.
- The summer bird count helped to discover the native bird species in Dudhwa as in winter migratory birds also join here.”
- Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, which is located on the India-Nepal border, is home to over 450 bird species, tigers, leopards, wild elephants, swamp deer, one-horned rhinos besides hundreds of other wild animals and reptiles.
- Its rich [wildlife](#), massive forest cover and fabulous flora and fauna attracts tourists and wildlife research scholars every year.

India's Space Mission:

Context:

India plans to have its own space station, and modalities for it will be worked out after the first manned mission, Gaganyaan, scheduled for August 2022, K. Sivan, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

About the Proposal:

- The proposed space station is envisaged to weigh 20 tonnes and serve as a facility where astronauts can stay for 15-20 days, and it would be placed in an orbit 400 km above earth.
- The time frame for launch is 5-7 years after Gaganyaan, he added.
- The ISRO would also join the international space community for a manned mission to moon and beyond.

Gaganyaan on track

- A Gaganyaan National Advisory Council has been created with members from different institutions and industries to oversee and advise on the mission.
- Selection of 2-3 crew members for Gaganyaan would be done in six months and added that they would then undergo training for 1-1.5 years after that.
- The initial phase of training would be in India and the advanced stage would be done abroad as the requisite facilities did not exist here and the project was on a short timeline.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 14-June-2019

- A GSLV Mk-III launch vehicle would be used to launch the Gaganyaan. Prior to that, two unmanned missions would be undertaken, one in December next year and the second, six months after that.
- The Gaganyaan mission aims to send a 2-3 person crew to space for a period of seven days.
- The spacecraft would be placed in a low earth orbit of 300-400 km.

After Chandrayaan-2, ISRO has set its sights on two interplanetary missions. Mission Aditya-L1 is scheduled for next year to study the Sun's corona, which effects climate on earth, and another mission to study Venus in 2-3 years.