

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 23, 2020

STATES

- On August 20, Rajasthan Government - has launched the 'Indira Rasoī Yojna' in order to pay special tribute to the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 76th birth anniversary.



- ✓ The scheme was launched by the Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot through video conferencing.
- ✓ It is a scheme that aims to provide nutritious food to poor people in urban areas at affordable prices.
- ✓ The government will be providing a budget of Rs 100 crore per year for the scheme, which aims to feed 4.87 crore people in a year.
- ✓ Under the scheme, the state government will provide nutritious food to the people at Rs 8 per meal.
 - ✓ Each plate will be actually priced at Rs 20 but the government will pay a subsidy of Rs 12 per meal.
 - ✓ A typical lunch will contain 100 grams of vegetables, 100 grams of pulses, 250 grams of chapati, and pickles.
- ✓ Under the scheme, the food will be prepared by 358 kitchens or Rasoīs that have been set up in 213 urban local bodies across the state.

- ✓ The government will also make provision for the people to eat the food in the canteens
- ✓ A special app has also been launched to check the quality of food being provided to the people.
- **Madhya Pradesh – has decided to offer state government jobs based on the marks secured by candidates in the common eligibility test (CET) by National Recruitment Agency (NRA).**
- ✓ With this, Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to offer jobs on the basis newly approved CET.
- ✓ The Union Cabinet has recently approved to set up National Recruitment Agency which will conduct a Common Eligibility Test to provide jobs to the youth.
 - ✓ This common test will replace the individual tests conducted for jobs through RRB, SSC and IBPS.
 - ✓ Once, the agency is established, candidates will be required to appear for only one common exam and those qualifying it will be eligible to get jobs in all the participating organisations.
 - ✓ The exam will be conducted at three levels- Graduate, 12th pass and 10th pass candidates.
 - ✓ This test will be conducted in online mode across the country.
 - ✓ The score card of CET will be valid for three years.
 - ✓ CET has been conceived to bring a transparency and accountability in the recruitment process.
- ✓ After announcing the state's decision, MP Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that this common eligibility test will save the students of the state from appearing in multiple tests and also the travel costs incurred on them.
- **On August 19, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan - announced that the state government has decided to distribute ration at minimum price to the non-ration holders in the state from September 1 amid the pandemic.**
- ✓ The CM said that every member of a family who is poor but does not have a ration card will get salt, wheat, and rice for Rs. 1 and Rs. 1.5 per litre of Kerosene per family.
- ✓ The government's move will benefit around 37 lakh people
- ✓ According to the plan, 10 kgs of food grain will be distributed for every person in a household, in addition to an additional 5 kgs of food grain for Rs. 1, which will be given until November 2020.
- ✓ The plan for the distribution of ration to the non-ration cardholders at a minimum price has been announced under the National Food Security Act.

NATIONAL

- On August 21, the National Highway Authority of India - launched the mobile application called “Harit Path” to monitor plantation along the National Highways



- ✓ It was launched by the Road Transport Minister, Nitin Gadkari
- ✓ So far 7,800 plants have been geo-tagged using the application.
- ✓ The application developed will monitor growth, location, species details and will maintain targets, achievements made by individual plantation projects.
- ✓ The application has been launched on Big Data Analytics platform -Data Lake.
 - ✓ Data Lake is a repository of data stored in raw format, which includes both structured data and transformed data consisting of various reports.
- ✓ Apart from launching mobile application, the NHAI has taken up nation-wide plantation drive called “Harit Bharat Sankalp”.
 - ✓ This has been launched to promote environment protection and sustainability through more plantations of trees.
 - ✓ Around 25 lakh plantations were planted in 25 days along the stretch of National Highway.
 - ✓ With this, the total number of plantations done during the year has gone to 35.22 lakh.
 - ✓ It was launched to commemorate 25 years of NHAI service to the nation.
- ✓ In order to track the growth of the plants, photographs of the plants are to be uploaded every three months.
- ✓ To make sure of the survival of the plants, a minimum height of 1.5 metres has been emphasized.
- ✓ In July 2020, the NHAI announced that it will start ranking the NHs based on quality service.
 - ✓ This is to be done based on highway efficiency, user services and highway safety.
 - ✓ Also, separate ranking is to be done on Build, Operate and Transfer model and on Engineering, Procurement and construction model.

- ✓ In 2019-20, the NHAI completed construction of 3,979 km of national highways, which is the highest-ever highway construction achieved.
- ✓ Under phase I of Bharatmala Pariyojana, 34,800 km of national highways was approved to be constructed between 2017 and 2022.
- **On August 21, the Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) – announced the extension of the unemployment benefit scheme Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana till June 2021.**



- ✓ The Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana is being implemented by Employee State Insurance Corporation.
 - ✓ The scheme was approved under the Employees State Insurance Act, 1948.
 - ✓ It provides support to the people who have lost their jobs due to changing employment pattern due to an international crisis or a domestic crisis.
 - ✓ The scheme was introduced in 2018.
 - ✓ It provides 25% of average per day earning in the previous four contribution periods
 - ✓ The scheme pays cash directly to bank account of insured persons during the period of unemployment.
 - ✓ Under the scheme, the workers can draw 47% of total contributions towards ESIC after being unemployed for at least three months.
- ✓ Apart from this scheme, the Centre has implemented several schemes which assist unemployed in the country, which includes Pradhan Mantri Berojgari Bhatta Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Potsahan Yojana, Pradhan mantra Rozgar Yojana among others.
- **On August 18, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar - chaired a meeting with deputy chief ministers and forest ministers of 24 states.**
- ✓ The meeting was also attended by the Chief Ministers of Goa and Arunachal Pradesh

- ✓ The Union minister announced that Project Dolphin, which was mentioned in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech, will be launched by the ministry in a fortnight.
- ✓ During the meeting, the minister announced that the CAMPA funds shall be used only for plantation drives and afforestation.
- ✓ The Minister also said that the centre has proposed to increase the forest-based devolution funds from 7% to 10% for the forest cover, following the recommendation of the Finance Commission
- ✓ The Minister has directed 80% of CAMPA funds to be used exclusively towards afforestation and plantation drives, while the rest can be used for capacity buildings
- ✓ The funds were currently used to pay salaries to forest officials and infrastructure acquisition.
- ✓ In August 2019, the centre has released CAMPA funds worth Rs. 47,436 crore for afforestation to various states.
- ✓ The Minister also said that the Centre will be implementing School Nursery Scheme shortly.
- ✓ During the meeting, the Minister highlighted various initiatives of the Ministry, which includes plantation drives, promoting urban forestry under Nagar Van scheme, landscape based catchment treatment of 13 major rivers, LiDAR based survey of degraded forest areas and launch of a national transit portal to facilitate movement of forest produce

CAMPA

- ✓ CAMPA is Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority.
- ✓ The forest lands shall be diverted for non-forest produce such as mining, construction of dams and other developmental activities.
- ✓ In such cases, the money paid by the developers who have utilised the forest land for other activities is called Compensatory Afforestation Fund.
- ✓ These funds are managed by CAMPA and hence they are also called CAMPA funds
- ✓ The establishment of CAMPA funds was ordered by Supreme Court in 2001.
- ✓ In 2006, CAMPA was established to manage Compensatory Afforestation Fund.
- ✓ The funds under the CAMPA act were to be used for compensatory afforestation and regeneration activities.
- ✓ As per rules of CAMPA funds, 90% of funds are to be given to the states and 10% is to be retained by the centre.
- ✓ Nagar Van Scheme was announced on World Environment Day (June 5), 2020.
 - ✓ It aims to develop 200 urban forests in the country in the next five years.
 - ✓ The finances of the scheme are to be used for CAMPA.

➤ **On August 18, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) - was signed between All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) and Delhi Police to extend**

Ayurveda preventive health services to the residential colonies of Delhi Police.

- ✓ Under the initiative, the health services are to be provided at the door steps of Delhi Police families by using a mobile unit named “Dhanwantari Rath”.



‘Dhanwantari Rath’



**to Bring Ayurveda at Doorsteps of
Delhi Police Families**

- ✓ Dhanwantari Rath has been launched is a continuation of the “Ayuraksha” initiative.
- ✓ The Ayuraksha is a joint venture of AIIA and Delhi Police.
 - ✓ It was created to maintain the sound health of frontline COVID-19 warriors, which includes the Delhi police personnel.
 - ✓ Under Ayuraksha, medical kits are being distributed to Delhi police personnel and other COVID-19 warriors.
 - ✓ So far, the kits have been distributed to around 80,000 police personnel in a period of 2 months.
- ✓ Through Dhanwantari Rath, the services are being extended to their families as well.
 - ✓ Doctors will visit Delhi Police colonies regularly in Dhanwantari Rath.
- ✓ The Delhi Police Force operates under Ministry of Home Affairs and not under Delhi Government.
- ✓ SWAT Commandos, formed in 2009, are also a part of the police force. Their main work is to fight against terrorist attacks in the National Capital Region.
- ✓ The Delhi Police Force is also a part of DANICS and DANIPS of India.
 - ✓ DANIPS is Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Police Service.
 - ✓ It is administering the Union Territories and National Capital Region of Delhi and operate under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
 - ✓ DANICS is Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Civil Service.
- **On August 18, the Asian Development Bank - approved \$1 billion loan to support construction of modern, first-of-its-kind, high-speed Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System in India.**

- ✓ The system is intended to improve regional connectivity by establishing transit options connecting Delhi and Meerut in Uttar Pradesh.
 - ✓ It is the first of the three priority rail corridors in the integrated transport network of NCR Regional Plan 2020-21.
 - ✓ The loan will be used to finance construction of station buildings, railway tracks, maintenance facilities, power supply and traction.
 - ✓ The project will use advanced and high technology signaling systems that will have multimodal hubs to ensure smooth transition to other transport modes.
 - ✓ Apart from the ADB, the Indian Government will also fund \$1.89 billion towards the project.
 - ✓ The ADB is also funding for social activities apart from the infrastructure development.
 - ✓ The ADB's Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction is intended for social welfare activities, apart from providing mobility aids such as wheel chairs for the differently abled, visual and hearing aids, etc.
 - ✓ The project will also train women and the differently abled on safe mobility.
 - ✓ It will also deliver better urban environment through systematic land use planning, reduced air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions.
 - ✓ The project will help the decongestion of the Capital City, New Delhi, as it accounts to 37% of population of the National Capital Region.
 - ✓ It will also provide safe and reliable seamless travel in the urban environment.
- **On August 18, the Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad - launched the "Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge" as part of AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan to achieve self-reliance.**



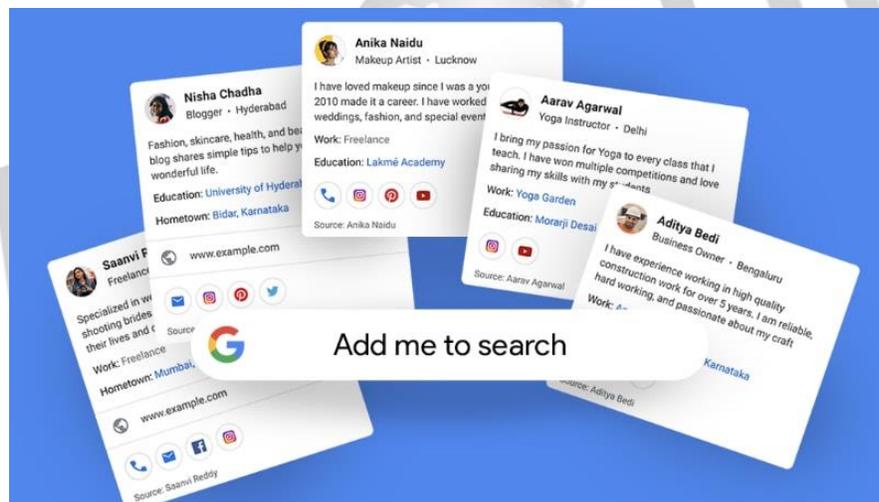
- ✓ The challenge aims to design microprocessors that have the ability to address global challenges.
- ✓ These challenges mainly include technological glitches and security aspects.
- ✓ The prize money of the challenge is Rs 4.3 crores.
- ✓ Students and startup companies can participate in the challenge.
- ✓ In related information, the Centre for Development of Advance Computing (CDAC) and IIT Madras has developed two indigenous micro-processors called SHAKTI and VEGA.
- ✓ The SHAKTI is a 32-bit processor and VEGA is a 64-bit processor.

- ✓ The processors were developed using an Open Source Architecture.
- **The International Labour Organization and the Asian Development Bank – recently released a joint report on “Tackling COVID-19 Youth employment crisis in Asia and Pacific”.**
- ✓ As per the report, around 41 lakhs of Indian youth are to lose their job due to Covid-19 crisis.
- ✓ The major percentage of job loss is to be faced by workers belonging to farm and construction sector.
- ✓ In 13 countries of the Asia and Pacific region, around 1-1.5 crores of youths might lose their jobs.
 - ✓ In the region, Pakistan will have maximum number of youth in the age group of 15-24 years losing jobs followed by India.
 - ✓ With this, the unemployment rate in India is to increase to 32.5%.
 - ✓ However, of all the countries in the region, Sri Lanka is to face the maximum unemployment at the rate of 37.8%
- ✓ In India, three-quarters of internships and two-thirds of firm-level apprenticeships were completely disrupted.
- **On August 19, the National Commission on Population - submitted its report on population projections for the period of 2011-36.**
- ✓ The commission was set up by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- ✓ According to the report, the sex ratio of the country is to increase from 943 (2011) to 957 (2036).
 - ✓ Sex Ratio is number of females per 1000 males.
- ✓ Further, the population of India is to reach 1.52 billion by 2036 with reference to 2011.
- ✓ India’s population is expected to grow by 25% in 2036 as compared to 2011.
- ✓ Moreover, as per the report, the population growth rate in the country will see a decline between 2011 and 2021.
 - ✓ Between 2011 and 2021, the population growth rate will be 12.5%, which is set to decrease further to 8.4% in 2021-31.
 - ✓ By 2031, India will overtake China and will be the most populous country in the world.
- ✓ Between 2001 and 2011, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were seeing more people migrating out of the state.
 - ✓ Also, these two states are to account for 34% population increase in the country between 2011 and 2036.
- ✓ On the hand, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Delhi and Haryana will see most of the migrant workers coming from other states.
 - ✓ As per the report, Uttar Pradesh will witness 30% of the population increase while Bihar will witness a 42% spike.

- ✓ The states UP, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal alone contribute to 54% population growth.
- ✓ The southern states Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu is projected to account to only 9% of population growth.
- ✓ Among all states, Bihar and UP also have the highest Total Fertility rates.
- ✓ The Total Fertility Rate of UP and Bihar was 3.5 and 3.7 respectively, which was significantly greater than the Total fertility rate of India which is 2.5.
 - ✓ During the survey period, as per the report, the TFR of India is to decline to 1.73.
- ✓ The report predicts that life expectancy of men is to become 71 from 66 and 74 from 69 for females.
 - ✓ Kerala will once again have the maximum life expectancy with above 80 years for women.
- ✓ The report projects that urban population in the country is to increase to 57% in 2036.
- ✓ Around 31% of Indians were living in urban cities in 2011, which is set to increase to 39% in 2036.
- ✓ More urban migration is to occur in the states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Kerala, Gujarat and Telangana.
- **The government – has proposed to set up 21 Centres of Excellence in the State-owned Technology Parks in India (STPI) to incubate new technologies.**
- ✓ The Government of India has already launched 12 CoEs, of which three are dedicated exclusively to agriculture.
- ✓ Apart from agriculture, the CoE also focuses more on forestry and fisheries.
 - ✓ This is because these 3 sectors - agriculture, forestry and fisheries - contribute to 17% of India's GDP
 - ✓ Apart from these three sectors, India has centres of excellence (CoE) for Internet of Things, electric vehicles, block chain, animation and gaming, etc.
- ✓ As of March 2020, there were 60 STPI Centres or sub centres in the country, which are mostly operational in Tier-II and Tier-III cities.
- ✓ The STPI was set up as an autonomous body in 1991 under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
 - ✓ The main objective of STPI is to promote software exports in the country with a special focus on SMEs and start up units.
 - ✓ The services rendered by STPI are data communication services, statutory services, training and value-added services.
 - ✓ The STPI has been implementing schemes such as Software Technology Park Scheme and Electronics Hardware Technology Park Scheme to promote IT industry.
- ✓ In January 2020, Centre of Excellence in Block Chain Technology was launched in Bengaluru.
- ✓ It was set up by National Informatics Centre.

- ✓ The Centre of Excellence is a resource place that provides research, leadership, support and training
- **The Government of India - has constituted National Council for Transgender Persons.**
 - ✓ The Council is to be headed by the Union Social Justice Minister.
 - ✓ It comprises of members from 10 central departments, members from the community and central department.
 - ✓ The Council has been formed under Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
 - ✓ The Council will also have joint secretary level members from ministries of health, minority affairs, education, labour, rural development.
 - ✓ Apart from the ministries, the council will also have members from Human Rights Commissions, NITI Aayog and National Commission for women
 - ✓ The council is mandated to perform five main functions, which includes advising the central government on formulation of policies, legislation, programmes and projects with respect to transgender persons, monitoring and evaluating impact of policies and programmes designed for achieving equality and full participation of transgenders, reviewing and coordinating activities of all departments, redressing grievances of transgender persons and performing other functions as prescribed by the centre.
 - ✓ According to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, a transgender is a person whose gender does not match gender assigned at birth.
 - ✓ The Act prohibits discrimination against the transgender persons in all the areas including education, access to goods, employment, health care, right to movement, to hold public offices, right to reside and access to government or public establishment
 - ✓ A transgender may make an application to the District Magistrate a certificate of identity indicating gender as “Transgender”
 - ✓ It also provides right of health facilities to transgender persons including sex reassignment surgeries and HIV surveillance centres.
- **The Bureau of Indian Standards - has prepared a draft standard for the supply of piped drinking water.**
 - ✓ It has been named “Drinking Water Supply Quality Management System-requirements for piped drinking water supply service”.
 - ✓ The draft was prepared by the BIS Public Drinking Water Supply Services Sectional Committee.
 - ✓ The draft was developed with the aim to provide safe and adequate drinking water to rural households by 2024.
 - ✓ As per the draft standard, the drinking water should conform to Indian Standard (IS) 10500, which was developed by BIS, after treatment
 - ✓ Further, it proposes to adopt District Metering Area concept as early as possible.

- ✓ Water should be sampled every four hours at the treatment plants and at the water reservoirs in the distribution system every eight hours
 - ✓ Also, random water sampling should be done at households
 - ✓ Water audit should be conducted on quarterly basis.
 - ✓ Water audit is the calculation of amount of water that is put to distribution as against the amount that is consumed.
 - ✓ District Metering Area is a concept that controls leakages in the water network.
 - ✓ Under the system, an area is divided into a number of sectors where the flow meters are installed to detect the leaks
 - ✓ IS 10500 is a standard that is applicable to limit various substances in drinking water
 - ✓ This includes heavy metals such as arsenic and pH of the water, dissolved salts, colour, odour and turbidity.
- **Google - has launched its new "People Cards" feature in India, which lets users to create their virtual visiting card and build their public profile for search engine.**



- ✓ The Google People Cards feature has been in a testing phase for a few years in India and has finally been launched now.
 - ✓ Users just need to have a Google Account and provide their mobile number to create their people card on Google Search.
 - ✓ For now, the people cards feature is available only in India for mobile users to create their own profile cards.
 - ✓ The feature is available in English language only.
- **The Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar - launched the data recovery centre of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), named Krishi Megh.**

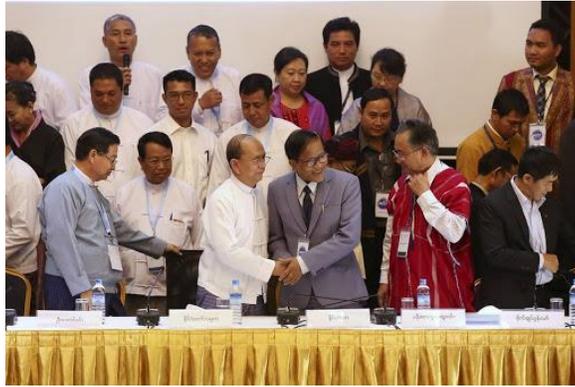


- ✓ It has been set up to protect the data of the government's premier agriculture research body.
- ✓ The data recovery centre-Krishi Megh has been set up at National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM), in Hyderabad.
- ✓ Currently, ICAR's main data centre is at the Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute (IASRI), in National Capital Delhi.
- ✓ Krishi Megh, the data recovery centre of ICAR has been set up under the National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP), which is funded by both the World Bank and the Indian government
- ✓ NAARM, Hyderabad has been chosen for the data centre as it lies in the different seismic zone with regard to the data centre at IASRI in New Delhi.
- ✓ During the launch event, Narendra Singh Tomar also launched KVC ALUNET (Krishi Vishwavidyalaya Chhatr Alumni Network) and Online Accreditation System for Higher Agricultural Educational Institutions.

INTERNATIONAL

- **On August 21, Myanmar Government and ten armed ethnic groups in the country - signed National Ceasefire Agreement at the Union Peace Conference.**
 - ✓ The peace accord signed is called the Union Peace Accord.
 - ✓ It contains 15 provisions to implement the National Ceasefire Agreement.
 - ✓ It includes troop deployment and protocol to deal with clashes between government troops and ethnic groups.
 - ✓ The peace process in Myanmar was started in 2011 to end the long-standing conflict between the ethnic armed forces and Myanmar Government.
 - ✓ Myanmar is a multi-ethnic country that is composed of seven ethnically designated states and regions.

- ✓ It includes Shans, Rakhines, Karens, Chins, Kachins, Was, Karenni, Nagas, Palaungs, etc.



- ✓ The Burmans, mostly Buddhists constitute to 68% of the total population.
 - ✓ These ethnic groups are demanding for separate lands.
 - ✓ The 2008 Constitution of Myanmar provided six self-administered zones such as Naga, Pa-O, Laung, Danu, Kokang and Wa respectively.
 - ✓ The Internal conflicts in Myanmar are attributed to a series of insurgencies in Myanmar after the country gained independence from United Kingdom in 1948.
 - ✓ Rohingyas are the Muslims living in the state of Rakhine of Myanmar.
 - ✓ According to the United Nations, they are the most persecuted minorities in the world.
 - ✓ The ethnic Rakhine want the Rohingyas Muslims completely evacuated from the state.
 - ✓ The Kachin people are the major ethnic minority in Myanmar, inhabiting the mountains of Kachin.
 - ✓ In 2012 alone, the conflict between these people and the Myanmar Government resulted in 2,500 casualties.
 - ✓ They are the largest insurgent group inhabiting the Kayah state.
 - ✓ They have formed the Karenni army and are fighting to obtain independence
 - ✓ The Karen people are the third largest ethnic group in Myanmar, accounting for 7% of country's total population.
- **On August 21, the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan - announced the discovery of large natural gas reserves in the Black Sea coast.**
- ✓ The country has identified 320 billion cubic metres of natural gas in the latest discovery.
 - ✓ Turkey is to start using the discovered natural gas by 2023
 - ✓ Turkey is highly dependent on Russia, Iran and Iraq for its energy resources, accounting for energy imports to the tune of \$41 billion in 2019.
 - ✓ Turkey has been already engaged in a conflict with Greece over the gas exploration issues in East Mediterranean region

- ✓ The domestic natural gas in India is obtained from oil and gas fields in south eastern and western areas of Mumbai along with the North Eastern region (Tripura and Assam).
- ✓ However, India imports 45% of its natural gas.
- ✓ The country has launched National Seismic Programme in 2016 to trace hydrocarbon resources such as oil and natural gas.
- ✓ It is also planning to launch a National Gas Grid, which will connect various cities to provide clean and green fuel to consumers

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

➤ **India, Japan and Australia – have proposed a new ‘Supply Chain Resilience’ initiative**

- ✓ The concept of the initiative was first proposed by Japan
- ✓ It was aimed at reducing the dependency of China in the global markets.
- ✓ It is a direct response to companies that are concerned about Chinese monopoly behaviour and disruption to supply chain.
- ✓ Japan had already approached the Indian Government about the initiative.
- ✓ With the aggressive moves of China in the Line of Actual Control, India has also decided to join the initiative.
- ✓ The main aim of the initiative is to attract foreign direct investment in the Indo-Pacific region and turn the region to an economic powerhouse.
- ✓ Also, it aims to build partner relationship between the countries in the region.
- ✓ The idea of the initiative has been thrown open to the ASEAN countries as well.

➤ **India and Israel - signed a new cultural agreement to strengthen people-to-people exchanges.**

- ✓ This agreement was signed by India’s Ambassador to Israel, Sanjeev Singla and Israel’s Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi.



- ✓ The new cultural agreement will be a three year programme on cultural cooperation from 2020-23.
- ✓ The areas of cooperation under the agreement are exchange of culture and art experts; organizing literature fests and book fairs as well as promoting the translation of famous works in each other’s languages; enhancing cooperation in

the protection of cultural heritage and archaeology with the help of Israel Antiquities Authority (IIA) and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

- ✓ The agreement also includes encourage direct contacts between national libraries and book publishers; student exchanges through scholarships.
- ✓ Further, co-operation in co-production in the field of cinema and audio-visual is also highlighted in the agreement.
- ✓ This co-operation on co-production was agreed by the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, during his visit to India in 2018.
- ✓ Also, major emphasis will be laid to bring the youth of both the countries together through participation in festivals, sharing experiences, knowledge, etc.
- ✓ In another recent development, Israel also signed a cooperation agreement with the Uttar Pradesh government on August 20 for resolving water crisis in Bundelkhand region.

COMMITTEES

- **The task force led by Ramesh Chand – has recommended Niti Aayog to link sugarcane prices to sugar rates to keep the industry in a sound financial health.**
- ✓ In its report, the task force has recommended for a one-time increase in the minimum sugar price at Rs 33 per kg.
- ✓ This report of the task force was finalized in March 2020 and published on August 20.
- ✓ The report suggests shifting of areas under sugarcane cultivation to less water-intensive crops by providing incentives to farmers.
- ✓ At present area for sugarcane cultivation is about 3 lakh hectares and it yields about 20 lakh tonnes of sugarcane.
- ✓ The panel suggested that the incentive provided to farmers for shifting to less water-intensive crops should be around Rs 6,000 per hectare.
- ✓ Further, the task force recommended introducing a Revenue Sharing Formula (RSF) to help farmers in receiving fair prices for their sugarcane produce along with a price stabilisation fund.
- ✓ It advised that the minimum support price (MSP) of sugarcane must be reviewed in six months.
- ✓ The panel also recommended levying a cess of Rs 50 per quintal on sugar for a period of 3 years to add about Rs 4,500 crore to the fund which could be used to improve financial conditions of farmers.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **On August 19, the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla - attended the fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.**



- ✓ The conference was organized by Parliament of Austria and Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva with the support of United Nations.
- ✓ Theme - Parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that delivers peace and sustainable development for the people and the planet
- ✓ The first World Conference of speakers of parliament was held in 2000 in New York.
 - ✓ After the Conference, the participants along with the United Nations committed themselves to help address challenges faced by the world community.
- ✓ The second conference was held in 2005 in New York, which resolved to bridge democracy gap in international relations.
- ✓ The third conference was held in 2010 in Geneva on the theme of “Parliament in a world crisis: Securing Global Democratic Accountability for the common good”.
- ✓ The fourth conference was held in 2015 on peace and development among democracies.
- ✓ The Inter-Parliamentary Union was established in 1889.
 - ✓ The national parliaments of 178 countries are its members.
 - ✓ It has a permanent observer status in United Nations.
 - ✓ The IPU promotes institutional values, democratic governance, besides promoting working with parliamentarians to respond to the needs and aspirations of the people.
- ✓ The IPU generates Global Parliamentary Report, which is jointly produced by IPU and United Nations Development Programme.
 - ✓ The first report was published in 2012.
- ✓ According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, India ranks 153 out of 190 nations in percentage of women representatives in the parliament.
- ✓ There were 65 women out of 545 MPs elected to Lok Sabha in May 2014.
- **On August 20, the External Affairs Minister S Jai Shankar - attended ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT).**
- ✓ It was the sixth-round table conference between India and AINTT.

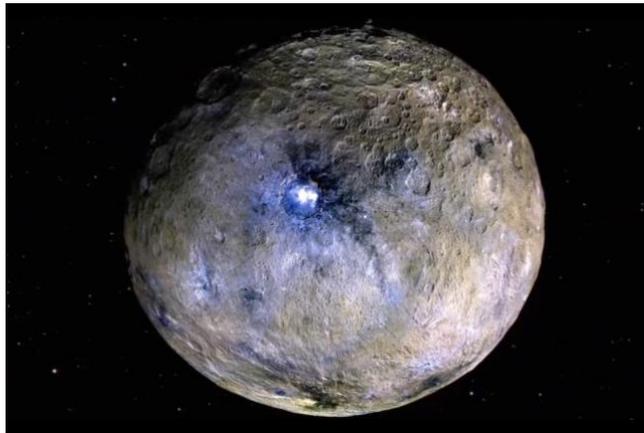
- ✓ During the virtual meeting, the External Affairs Minister focused on the concerns of the global supply chains and ways to boost the supply chain between India and ASEAN countries



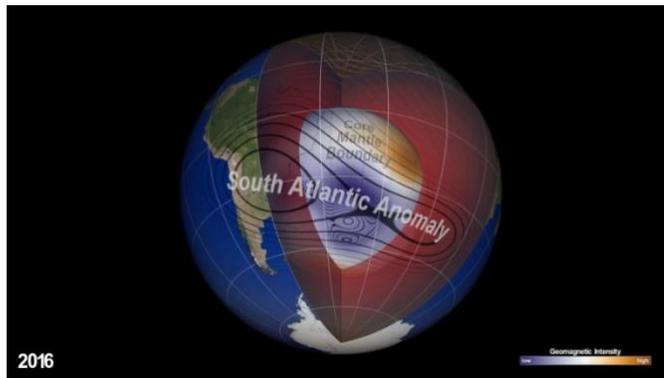
- ✓ He also spoke about the intention of India to expand Indo-Pacific initiative
- ✓ ASEAN is Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
 - ✓ It was established to promote social and political stability in the post-colonial states of Asia-Pacific regions.
 - ✓ The motto of ASEAN is One Vision, One Identity, One Community.
 - ✓ August 8 is observed as ASEAN Day.
 - ✓ The member nations of ASEAN are Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia.
- ✓ The sixteenth India-ASEAN Summit was held in November 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand.
- ✓ Along with the summit, the other summits such as 14th East Asia Summit, 35th ASEAN Summit and 3rd meeting of RCEP were also held.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The NASA researchers - have now discovered that the dwarf planet, Ceres has an ocean world.**
- ✓ There are five dwarf planets in the solar system, namely Pluto, Eris, Haumea, Makemake and Ceres.
- ✓ Ceres is found between Mars and Jupiter.
- ✓ According to the research, Ceres looks like a remnant ocean world.
- ✓ Also, Ceres has a brine reservoir that is located 40 km deep and is hundreds of miles wide, making it water rich.
- ✓ There are other moons and dwarf planets in the solar system where oceans exist, which includes moons of Jupiter and Saturn.
- ✓ The Ceres was first spotted in 1801 by Giuseppe Piazzi.
- ✓ He assumed that Ceres was the missing planet between Jupiter and Mars. However, it was clarified as dwarf planet in 2006.



- ✓ The United States has launched the Dawn mission in September 2007.
 - ✓ Dawn was the first mission to orbit a dwarf planet and the first to orbit two bodies in the main asteroid belt.
 - ✓ Dawn orbited the protoplanet Vesta in 2011 and was in orbit around the dwarf planet Ceres as part of its mission in 2015.
 - ✓ It was retired on November 1, 2018, and it is currently in an uncontrolled orbit around its second target, the dwarf planet Ceres
- ✓ The International Astronomical Union has specified four main conditions for a planet to be called as a 'dwarf planet'.
- ✓ A "dwarf planet" is a celestial body that
 - ✓ should orbit around the Sun,
 - ✓ has sufficient mass for its self-gravity to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic equilibrium (nearly round) shape
 - ✓ has not cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit, and
 - ✓ is not a satellite.
- **The NASA Scientists - have discovered a small but an evolving dent in the earth's magnetic field over South America and South Atlantic Ocean.**
 - ✓ It is an unusually weak spot and is called South Atlantic Anomaly.
 - ✓ The Earth's magnetic field acts as a protective shield to the planet as it repels and traps charged particles from the sun.
 - ✓ The South Atlantic Anomaly allows the charged particles to dip closer to the earth's surface than normal.
 - ✓ This knocks out onboard computers and is capable of interfering with data collection from satellites.
 - ✓ The South Atlantic Anomaly arises due to two features of the Earth's core - tilt of earth's magnetic axis and the flow of molten metals within the outer core.
 - ✓ In May 2020, the Swarm Constellation Mission of the European Space Agency updated the development of South Atlantic Anomaly.
 - ✓ According to the mission, the earth's magnetic field has lost around 9% of its strength in 200 years.



- ✓ Between 1970 and 2020 the strength has dropped from 24,000 nanotesla to 22,000 nanotesla.
- ✓ Swarm Constellation Mission was the first constellation of satellites of European Space Agency for Earth Observation.
 - ✓ The constellation consists of three satellites to measure magnetic fields of the earth.
- **On August 20, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) - said that the second lunar mission of India Chandrayaan-2 has completed one year around the Moon in the lunar orbit.**
- ✓ According to ISRO, all the instruments of Chandrayaan-2 are performing well at present.
- ✓ ISRO also highlighted that the fuel onboard is adequate to keep Chandrayaan-2 operational for seven more years.
- ✓ The orbiter completed more than 4,400 orbits around the Moon.
- ✓ Although, the soft-landing attempt of the lander failed last year, the orbiter was placed successfully in the lunar orbit.
- ✓ The agency has also claimed that the orbiter is being maintained in 100 +/- 25 km polar orbit with periodic orbit maintenance (OM) maneuvers.
- ✓ Chandrayaan-2 was launched to enhance the knowledge about the moon through a detailed study of its surface chemical composition, topography, thermo-physical characteristics, mineralogy, and atmosphere.
- ✓ Chandrayaan-2 was launched on July 22, 2019 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Andhra Pradesh and was inserted into the lunar orbit of Moon on August 20, 2019.
- ✓ The first lunar mission Chandrayaan-1 was launched by ISRO in October 2008 and was operated till August 2009.

DEFENCE

- **On August 13, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh - launched the Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO) through an online webinar.**



- ✓ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other dignitaries were also present at the event.
- ✓ NIIO will facilitate the interaction of industry and academia towards fostering the innovation and indigenisation for self -reliance in defence with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- ✓ During the event, the Indian Navy also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with the Raksha Shakti University (RSU) Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh Expressway Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA), the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers, and Maker Village, Kochi.
- ✓ NIIO is a three-tiered organisation.
- ✓ Naval Technology Acceleration Council (N-TAC) will be responsible for twin aspects of innovation and indigenisation and will provide apex level directives, while a working group under N-TAC will be implementing the projects.
- ✓ A Technology Development Acceleration Cell (TDAC) has also been developed for the induction of emerging disruptive technology in an accelerated time frame.
- ✓ A compendium of Indian Navy's Indigenisation perspective plans titled 'SWAVLAMBAN' has also been released on the occasion.

ECONOMY

- **The government - is planning to expand the list of domestic manufacturers targeted for the ambitious production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for mobile phones to seven against the five that is currently stipulated**
- ✓ The decision is expected to provide a major boost to electronics manufacturing by local manufacturers
- ✓ The proposed increase could be done through either the expansion of the present scheme, or by calling out another package to include the additional ones.
- ✓ The ₹41,000 crore scheme aims to generate additional production of nearly ₹12 lakh crore over the next five years
- ✓ It will also have five international players that include four top contract manufacturers of American electronics giant Apple (Foxconn Hon Hai, Rising Star, Wistron and Pegatron), apart from Korean major Samsung
- ✓ From the domestic side, a total of seven companies had applied for the incentive scheme even though the original plan from the government is for five players.

- ✓ These seven entities are two companies each from Lava group (Lava and Sojo) and Dixon Technologies (Dixon and Padget Electronics), apart from single applications from Bhagwati (Micromax), Optiemus Infra and United Tele (of Karbonn group).
 - ✓ The last date for filing of the application was July 31, and the applications are now being verified by an empowered committee, following which it goes to a high-powered multi-ministry Empowered Committee (EC).
 - ✓ The government is expecting to attract fresh investments to the tune of ₹11,000 crore through the scheme which is likely to generate 3 lakh direct jobs and 9 lakh indirect ones
- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - has launched the National Strategy for Financial Education (NSFE) to be implemented for the period of next five years from 2020 to 2025.**
- ✓ This is the second national strategy, while the first NSFE was launched in 2013.
 - ✓ NSFE 2020-25 has been launched with an aim of achieving a financially conscious and empowered India.
 - ✓ Under the Second National strategy, the RBI has launched a 5-Core Actions approach.
 - ✓ The five Cs highlighted by NSFE 2020-25 are Capacity, Content, Communication, Community, and Collaboration.
 - ✓ Here, “Content” refers to the curriculum in schools, whereas the term “Capacity” is used for developing capacity in intermediaries involved in financial services.
 - ✓ “Communication and Community” are used to create a community based model for financial literacy using communication strategy.
 - ✓ Lastly, “Collaboration” is used to enhance the partnership/collaboration among various stakeholders.
 - ✓ The strategy also suggested adopting robust monitoring framework to evaluate to the progress made.
 - ✓ The first NSFE was launched by National Centre for Financial Education.
 - ✓ It is a Section 8 (Non-Profit) company that is promoted by the Reserve Bank of India, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) and Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
 - ✓ Its key objective is to promote Financial Education across India for all sections of society as per National Strategy for Financial Education of Financial Stability and Development Council.
 - ✓ Its vision is “A financially aware and empowered India.”

AWARDS

- **Ravi Solanki, an Indian-origin physician - has been named among the 19 winners of the UK’s Royal Academy of Engineering President’s Special Awards for Pandemic Service.**



- ✓ The winners have been announced on August 17 for their exceptional achievements in tackling COVID-19 throughout the United Kingdom.
- ✓ Ravi Solanki is a physician who has been working on neurodegenerative diseases.
 - ✓ He is associated along with Raymond Siems, an engineer working in machine learning
 - ✓ Both Ravi and Raymond were awarded for their volunteer work to help in building a secure and fully functioning website for a new National Health Services (NHS) charity HEROES
- ✓ The special awards were conferred to the teams, organisations, individuals, projects, and collaborations across all the technical specialties, career stages, and disciplines within the UK Engineering community.
- ✓ The duo, Ravi Solanki and Raymond Siems, have been praised for working in the record time for making the platform efficient and sophisticated
 - ✓ They have ensured that the platform receive funding, ensures well being and provide counselling, childcare support and the sustainable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the National Health Services (NHS) workers.
 - ✓ Their technical know-how had allowed HEROES to support 90,000 NHS workers in three months.
- ✓ Further, specially commissioned silver medals will also be presented to all the 19 winners later in 2020.
- **Short film 'Am I?' directed by Abhijit Paul - has won the first prize in an Online Short Film Contest organized by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting along with National Film Development Corporation (NFDC).**
 - ✓ The first prize carried a cash award of Rs. 1 lakh
 - ✓ The second prize was bagged by 'Ab India Banega Bharat' directed by Debojo Sanjiv, which includes a cash prize of Rs. 50,000.
 - ✓ The third prize has been won by a film titled '10 Rupees' directed by Yuvraj Gokul and it received a cash prize of Rs. 25,000.
 - ✓ The theme, as announced by the I&B Ministry and NFDC, for the short film entries was to revolve around patriotism along with Atmanirbharta or self-reliance as the new mantra of progress for the nation.
 - ✓ The contest was hosted on www.MyGov.in website for receiving the entries.

- ✓ It was organized as a part of Independence Day Celebrations-2020



- ✓ The contest went live on July 14, 2020, on the portal and had ended on August 7.
- ✓ Apart from the three winners, the ministry has also announced Special Mention Certificates for eight short films.
- ✓ The winners have been declared by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on August 21, 2020.

SPORTS

- **Wing Commander Gajanand Yadava - has been conferred the 'Tenzing Norgye National Adventure Award 2019' in air adventure category**
- ✓ Gajanand Yadava is a Parachute Jump Instructor.
 - ✓ He is also a member of IAF's Skydiving Team `Akash Ganga`.
 - ✓ He has undertaken more than 2900 jumps till date, as per the IAF's estimates.
- ✓ The Indian Air Force also congratulated to Air Force Sports Control Board (AFSCB) for being awarded the 'Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar 2020'.
- ✓ The award acknowledges sustained efforts towards encouragement and promotion of Sports.



- ✓ The Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Awards are regarded as India's highest national awards for adventure sports.
 - ✓ The awards are considered at par with the Arjuna award.
 - ✓ The awards are conferred in four categories- Air adventure, land adventure, water adventure and lifetime achievement.
- **The Sports Ministry - will organise 'Fit India Freedom Run', a largest country-wide run, from August 15 to October 2, 2020.**
- ✓ Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju launched the mega-event on August 14.



- ✓ The event organised by the Sports Ministry aims at encouraging fitness among the masses while also following the COVID-19 protocols
- ✓ Individuals and the organisations will be able to register for the 'Fit India Freedom Run' event on the Fit India website.
- ✓ Amid the ongoing pandemic situation, the sports ministry has decided to encourage the participants of the event to run at their own pace, anywhere and anytime as per their convenience.
- ✓ The total kilometers covered by the participant can be tracked using a Global Positioning System (GPS) watch manually.
- ✓ Earlier also, Fit India had organised numerous big-scale events such as Fit India Cyclothon and Fit India Plog Run to take the message of fitness to the masses.
- ✓ 'Fit India Freedom Run' event has been organised to mark the 74th Independence Day of India on August 15 and will continue till the 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2, 2020.