

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-MARCH 13, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- Thiruvallur collector Alby John Varghese - bagged two awards at the conference of district collectors, superintendents of police and district forest officers at the Secretariat.



- ✓ Trichy collector S Sivasarasu and Thiruvallur collector Varghese won the first and second prizes for efficient disposal of the petitions received at the chief ministers' help desk.
- ✓ Further, CM M K Stalin presented the awards for implementation of rural development programmes to Tiruvannamalai (B Muruges), Theni (K V Muralidharan) and Namakkal (Shreya P Singh) collectors.
- ✓ The collectors of Ramanathapuram (Shankar Lal Kumawat), Kanyakumari (M Aravind) and Thiruvallur (Alby John Varghese) districts were awarded first, second and third places for implementation of schemes under health and family welfare department.
- ✓ Chief Minister MK Stalin inaugurated the three-day conference of the district collectors, superintendents of police, and forest officials in Chennai on March 10
- ✓ This is the first conference of the district-level top officials after the present DMK government came to power.

- ✓ This is also the first time that district-level forest officials are also participating in the conference
- ✓ During the meeting, the CM urged the forest officials to make efforts to increase the forest cover in the state from the existing 24% to 33% in the next ten years
- **Airports Authority of India - has introduced an IP-based communication system at the air traffic control complex at Chennai airport to help plan the flights better**

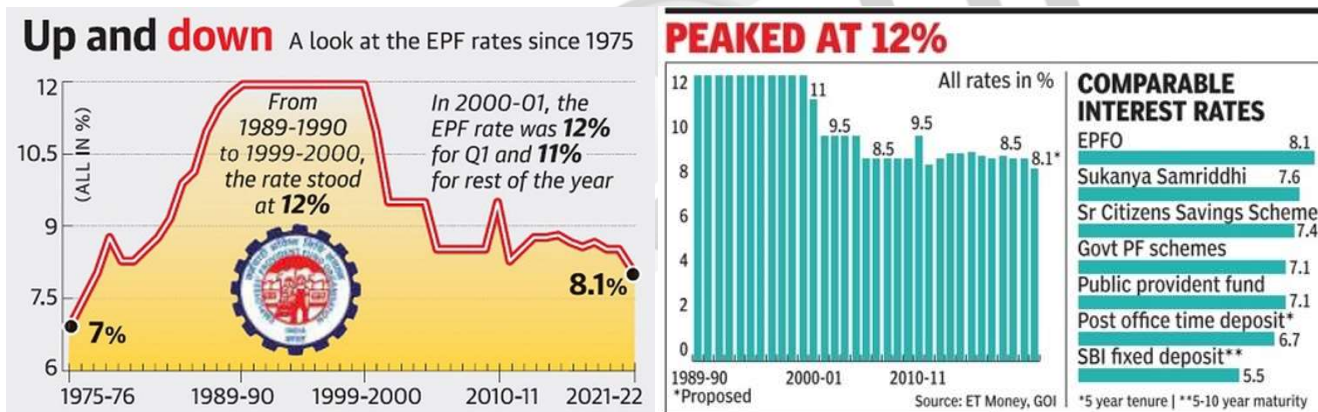
<p>ABOUT THE SYSTEM</p> <p>It is used to transmit data on flight plan, air routes, weather, distress signals, condition of navigational aid from one airport to the other</p>	<p>HOW IT WORKS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chennai airport is linked to global aeronautical fixed telecommunication network ➤ Data messages from the airport are transmitted over fixed telecommunication lines on the ground to another airport ➤ Internet protocol is used to transmit data digitally faster ➤ It helps the airport send the messages about 	 <p>airspace or airport condition to all airports and airlines automatically</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pilots use the information to prepare a flight plan, change a plan 	<p>BENEFITS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Data messages reach faster ➤ More data can be sent ➤ Entire weather map, route maps, landing and take off route plans can be sent ➤ Airlines will get their pre-flight briefing on weather, route, clearance at their office
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- ✓ The new system will alert airlines and pilots about ground delays, weather, air force activity and rocket launches and other airspace and airport disturbances faster
- ✓ Till now, the Chennai airport was using conventional fixed line telecommunication network to share messages which caused delays in sharing the information
- ✓ The IP-based Automatic Message Switching System (IP-AMSS) software helps the airport share information automatically and faster through its ground communication network and with airlines and pilots
- ✓ The system will ensure that flights can be planned and operated efficiently by minimising delays when traffic is high.
- ✓ The IP-AMSS software was developed in-house by AAI engineers and was launched on March 12, 2022
- **Tamil Nadu – to remain part of the Centre’s ‘Sagar Parikrama’ Program, that seeks to salute the country’s freedom fighters, sailors and fishermen**
- ✓ The Phase-I of the program was launched earlier in Gujarat by Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Parshottam Rupala as part of ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’ initiative
- ✓ Sagar Parikrama program is proposed to be celebrated in all coastal states/UTs through a pre-decided sea route from Gujarat along Diu, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands

- ✓ During the voyage, interaction programme will be held with fishermen, fisher communities and stakeholders in these locations and districts in order to know the problems of coastal fisher folk.
- ✓ During the event, certificates related to Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampadha scheme, Kisan Credit Card and other state schemes will be awarded to the fishermen, especially coastal fishermen, fish farmers, young fishery entrepreneurs etc.
- ✓ The Country has a coastline of 8118 km, covering 9 maritime States/4UTs and providing livelihood support to millions of coastal fisher folk

NATIONAL

- On March 12, the state-run retirement fund manager, Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) - decided to pay 8.1% rate of interest on provident fund deposits to its 6.42 crore active subscribers for the current financial year 2021-22



- ✓ The decision was taken in EPFO's central board of trustees meeting held in Guwahati
- ✓ The interest rate on EPF deposits for 2021-22 will now be sent to the Ministry of Finance for concurrence
- ✓ Subsequently, it gets notified by the Labour Ministry and credited into accounts of the subscribers by the EPFO.
- ✓ This is the lowest interest rate since 1977-78 when the EPF interest rate stood at 8%
- ✓ Provident fund savings are mandatory under the Employees Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.
- ✓ According to EPFO rules, at least 12% of an employee's basic salary is compulsorily deducted to be saved in provident fund, while an employer co-contributes another 12%.
- ✓ The EPFO invests 85% of its annual accruals in debt instruments including government securities and bonds and 15% in equity through ETFs.

- ✓ The earnings from both debt and equity are used to calculate the interest payment.
 - ✓ The payout is in line with the agency's earnings and will leave it with a surplus of ₹450 crore during the financial year.
 - ✓ Under the rules, EPFO has to decide on the interest payment based on its earnings and cannot seek external support.
 - ✓ The central board of trustees of EPFO or CBT is a tripartite body involving government, workers and employers' representatives and the decision of CBT is binding on EPFO.
 - ✓ It is headed by the labour minister, Bhupendra Yadav
 - ✓ Earlier, the retirement body EPFO kept the interest rate unchanged on the provident fund deposits at 8.5% for the financial year 2020-21
 - ✓ Until December 31, the EPFO had settled 56.79 lakh claims worth Rs. 14,310.21 crore provided under the advance facility.
 - ✓ Among the small savings schemes, only Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme, targeted at the girl child, and the Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme fetch higher returns.
- **On March 12, the government - released the draft policy exclusively for the medical devices industry, which is currently regulated as medicines**
- ✓ The proposed National Medical Devices Policy 2022 aims to put in place a comprehensive set of measures for ensuring sustained growth and development of the MedTech Sector
 - ✓ The medical devices sector in India is an essential and integral constituent of the Indian healthcare sector for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management of all medical conditions, diseases, illnesses, and disabilities.
 - ✓ This sector is expected to grow in market size from the present \$11 billion to \$50 billion by 2025
 - ✓ The Department of Pharmaceuticals under the Chemicals and Fertilizers ministry is inviting feedback and remarks of the Industry and stakeholders till March 25, 2022
 - ✓ The proposed policy seeks to address the challenges of the industry such as regulatory streamlining, skilling of human resources and lack of technology for high-end equipment and lack of appropriate infrastructure, through a coherent policy framework.
 - ✓ It also plans to facilitate an orderly growth of the sector, boosting local manufacturing and reducing imports to half over the next decade.
 - ✓ Currently, nearly 80% of the medical devices used in the country are imported products, particularly high-end devices and medical equipment.
 - ✓ This policy envisions that India will have few National Institutes of Medical Devices Education and Research (NIMERs) on the lines of NIPERs by 2047.
 - ✓ The Medical Device Sector has remained largely unregulated till 2017

- ✓ In 2017, Medical Device Rules, 2017 were framed by CDSCO for comprehensive regulation of MDs in a phased manner, especially on the quality, safety, and efficacy aspects, under the Drugs and Cosmetic Act, 1940.
- **Union Minister for Space Jitendra Singh - inaugurated the Satish Dhawan Centre for Space Sciences at the Central University of Jammu on March 12**

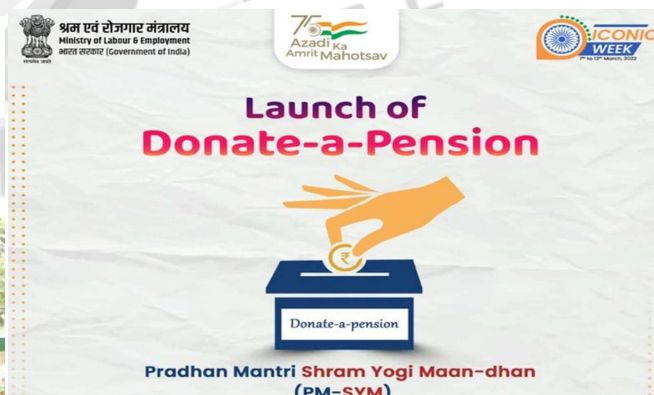


- ✓ This is North India's first big space centre and the country's second-of-its-kind space training institute after the Thiruvananthapuram hub
 - ✓ The first course, B.Tech in Aviation and Aeronautics, with an intake capacity of 60 students, will start this year for which IIT-JEE would be the qualifying exam
 - ✓ In October 2018, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) had signed a MoU with the Central University of Jammu to set up the centre with facilities for geo-spatial data analysis that will help in sustainable use of natural resources and plan land-use patterns.
 - ✓ The centre has ground-based observations for atmospheric studies, research lab for astrophysics, atmospheric sensing and glacier studies laboratory for better use of large quantities of water stored in the form of seasonal snow, ice and glaciers in the rivers of north India.
 - ✓ During the event, Jitendra Singh said that at his suggestion, the centre was named after the former ISRO chairman as he was a resident of Jammu and Kashmir, and a real pride of the Dogra community.
 - ✓ Asking the youth to become self-reliant, the Minister said, the purple revolution started by IIIM Jammu (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine) is spreading fast across the country.
 - ✓ Purple Revolution is Jammu and Kashmir's contribution to start-ups in India.
 - ✓ Also called 'Aroma Mission', it was launched by the Union Ministry of Science and Technology through the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
- **On March 11, the Ministry of Home Affairs - has notified certain amendments to Census rules, modifying the Census Rule, 1990**

- ✓ The Census (Amendment) Rules, 2022 allow the data collection in both paper and electronic form during the decennial Census exercise
 - ✓ Accordingly, the new rules include “electronic form” and “self-enumeration” in the upcoming Census and National Population Register (NPR).
 - ✓ As defined, “self-enumeration” means filling-up, completion and submission of census schedule by respondents themselves”.
 - ✓ The term “electronic form” indicates any information generated, sent, received or stored in media, magnetic, optical, computer memory, micro film, computer generated micro fiche or similar device
- ✓ The announcement in this regard was made in 2020, but it was only notified two years later, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ Further, 'Directors of Census Operations' will be appointed in 10 states, which includes Sikkim, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat (Daman Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli), Tamil Nadu (Puducherry) and Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India (ORGI).
- ✓ Other amendments include adding other mediums such as print media, electronic media, social media, and existing mediums such as radio, audio-visuals, and posters for the publicity process.
- ✓ The housing listing phase of the census and the exercise to update the NPR were scheduled to be carried out across the country from April 1 to September 30, 2020, but got postponed due to Covid outbreak.
- ✓ According to the earlier schedule, the census would have its reference date as March 1, 2021 and in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, it would have been October 1, 2020.
- ✓ The Centre recently extended the deadline for jurisdictional changes for all states up to June 30, 2022 as against the earlier deadline of December 31, 2021
- ✓ The census operation continues to be on hold and the government is yet to announce the new schedule.
- ✓ The National Population Register (NPR) will follow a three-pronged approach- that involves updating the necessary data on the web portal, offline and a mobile application.
- ✓ A total of 30 lakh enumerators, consisting of government officials and government school teachers, will be given the responsibility to conduct the process through online and offline mediums.
- ✓ Each of them will be assigned 650-800 people each for the job
- **The Union Cabinet - approved recently the setting up of the National Land Monetization Corporation (NLMC) to monetise surplus land and building assets of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and other agencies linked to the Government**

- ✓ The fully wholly owned government of India company, coming under the Ministry of Finance, will fast track the monetisation of land and non-core assets of public sector entities
 - ✓ For setting up NLMC, the Centre allocated an initial authorised share capital of Rs 5,000 crore and paid-up share capital of Rs 150 crore.
 - ✓ So far, the CPSEs have referred 3,400 acres of land and other non-core assets for monetisation from CPSEs comprising Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL), B&R, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), BEML Limited, HMT Ltd among others
 - ✓ Railways, Telecommunications and Defence are among key ministries holding the maximum surplus land
 - ✓ There will be a chief executive officer (CEO) and a technical team to facilitate land monetisation.
 - ✓ Further, there will members from senior officials of the finance ministry, department of public enterprises, ministry of housing and urban affairs and independent directors from finance, real estate industry in the corporation.
 - ✓ The NLMC is likely to operate on the fee-based model and may become a permanent entity to monetise land on regular basis
 - ✓ Monetisation of non-core assets envisages unlocking of value of unutilised or under-utilised assets and generate returns on the equity that the government has invested in them
 - ✓ The corporation will be allowed to raise capital from the equity market, based on the value of its leased assets
 - ✓ During Budget 2021, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed to form a special purpose vehicle (SPV) for the purpose
 - ✓ While the Government had set a target of Rs 1.75 lakh crore through disinvestment in its Budget estimates in 2021-22, the target has been revised to Rs 78,000 crore
 - ✓ The target for the year 2022-23 is kept at Rs 65,000 crore due to Covid-19 pandemic
 - ✓ Last September, the Government had announced a four-year National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) worth an estimated Rs 6 lakh crore.
 - ✓ Roads, Railways and power sector assets will comprise over 66% of the total estimated value of assets to be monetised.
- **On March 10, the Ministry of Education – has released the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2020-21 on school education of India**
- ✓ The UDISE+ system of online data collection from the schools was developed by the Department of School Education and Literacy in the year 2018-19
 - ✓ It seeks to overcome the issues related to erstwhile practice of manual data filling in paper format and subsequent feeding on computer at the block or district level in the UDISE data collection system, which was initiated in 2012-13.

- ✓ As per the report, the total students enrolled in school education from primary to higher secondary stood has improved to 25.38 crore in the 2020-21, as against 25.10 crore in 2019-20
 - ✓ Further, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), which measure the general level of participation, has improved in 2020-21 at all levels of school education compared to 2019-20
 - ✓ The number of non-teaching staff, according to UDISE+, has also improved over the years.
 - ✓ Among other improvements, schools with functional electricity have made impressive progress during 2020-21 with net addition of 57,799 schools provided electricity.
 - ✓ The number of schools with functional drinking water has increased to 95.2% in 2020-21 from 93.7% in 2019-20.
 - ✓ The report also noted that around 39.7 lakh students of government aided, private school students have shifted to Government schools during 2020-21 in the midst of pandemic
- **Union Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav - launched recently the 'Donate-a-Pension' programme**



- ✓ The programme was launched as part of many initiatives by the Labour Ministry, which were launched in the Iconic Week being celebrated from 7th to 13th of this month.
- ✓ It is an initiative under the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM) pension scheme
- ✓ Under the programme, people can donate the premium contribution of their immediate support staff including domestic workers, drivers and helpers.
- ✓ Workers in the unorganised sector with the age group of 18 to 40 years can register themselves in the programme and deposit a minimum of Rs 660 to 2400 every year depending on their age.
- ✓ After they attain 60 years, they will receive the minimum assured pension of Rs 3,000 per month.
- ✓ The Minister also launched e SHRAM on the UMANG app.

- ✓ Over 25 crore informal sector workers involved in 400 different occupations have registered on the e-Shram portal in the country.
 - ✓ The PM-SYM is a 50:50 voluntary and contributory pension scheme in which the beneficiary makes a stipulated age-specific contribution and the Central Government matches it.
 - ✓ The beneficiary of the scheme can be any worker of the unorganised sector mostly engaged as home-based workers, street vendors, mid-day meal workers among others
 - ✓ According to the Labour Ministry, any worker whose monthly income is Rs 15,000 per month or less and belong to the entry age group of 18-40 years are eligible for the scheme.
 - ✓ Moreover, they should not be covered under New Pension Scheme (NPS), Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) scheme or Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).
- **The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi - has approved recently the establishment of a WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (WHO GCTM) in Jamnagar, Gujarat.**
- ✓ This would be the first and only global outposted Centre (office) for traditional medicine across the globe.
 - ✓ The deal for setting up the centre was done between the Government of India and the World Health Organization (WHO) by signing a Host Country agreement
 - ✓ The WHO GCTM will be established under the Ministry of Ayush in India
 - ✓ In this regard, a Joint Task Force (JTF) has been constituted for coordination, execution and monitoring of activities for the establishment of this Centre
 - ✓ The JTF comprises representatives from the Government of India, Permanent Mission of India, Geneva and the World Health Organization.
 - ✓ On the occasion of 5th Ayurveda Day on 13 November, 2020, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, had announced the establishment of a WHO GCTM in India
- **The Indian government - has recently allowed the import and manufacture of national flags which are machine-made of polyester**
- ✓ The 2002 Flag Code of India has been amended for this purpose.
 - ✓ The rules earlier permitted only flags made by "hand-spun and woven wool or cotton or silk khadi bunting" while the import of machine-made flags was banned in 2019.
 - ✓ The knitted polyester outdoor flags are available on e-commerce websites while the government has cautioned against use of plastic national flags
 - ✓ In 2009, the MHA granted permission for the national flag to fly day and night on public and private institutions and buildings.
 - ✓ Flag Code of India, 2002, consisting of three sections, came into force on January 26, 2002.

INTERNATIONAL

- **On March 12, Saudi Arabia - executed 81 people convicted of crimes ranging from killings to belonging to militant groups**
- ✓ This is the largest known mass execution carried out in the kingdom in its modern history.
- ✓ The executions carried out surpassed even the toll of a January 1980 mass execution for the 63 militants convicted of seizing the Grand Mosque in Mecca in 1979, the worst-ever militant attack to target the kingdom.
- ✓ According to Saudi Arabia, the executions included those “convicted of various crimes, including the murdering of innocent men, women and children”.
- ✓ The kingdom also said some of those executed were members of al-Qaida, the Islamic State group and also backers of Yemen’s Houthi rebels.
- ✓ A Saudi-led coalition has been battling the Iran-backed Houthis since 2015 in Yemen in an effort to restore the internationally recognised government to power.
- ✓ Of the 81 people, 73 were Saudi citizens, seven were Yemeni and one was a Syrian national.
- ✓ The accused were provided with the right to an attorney and were guaranteed their full rights under Saudi law during the judicial process
- ✓ The kingdom’s last mass execution came in January 2016, when the kingdom executed 47 people.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **Four Caribbean nations — Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, St Lucia and St Kitts & Nevis — have signed an MoU for the ‘Save Soil’ global movement**



- ✓ The movement was initiated by Sadhguru of Isha Foundation to address the soil crisis by inspiring people from around the world to stand up for soil health.
- ✓ The idea of the movement is to drive policy change worldwide to safeguard, nurture and sustain soil fertility.
- ✓ It has been launched as a long-term global effort to create awareness among people to inspire human-environmental action.

- ✓ The MoU was signed by the heads of government and ministers of the Caribbean nations on March 11, 2022
- ✓ The signing comes ahead of the launch of Sadhguru's 30,000-km motorcycle ride across Europe, central Asia, west Asia and India as part of the 'Save Soil' campaign, starting March 21.
- ✓ Those involved in signing of the MoU include PM of St. Kitts and Nevis, Timothy Harris; PM of Dominica, Roosevelt Skerrit; PM of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne; and PM of St. Lucia Philip J. Pierre.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **On March 12, Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri - launched the 'India Water Pitch-Pilot-Scale Start-up Challenge' under the ministry's Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0**



- ✓ Under the initiative, the government will select 100 start-ups and provide Rs 20 lakh each as funding support and mentorship
 - ✓ The new initiative aims at empowering start-ups in the water sector to grow through innovation and design that will drive sustainable economic growth and generate employment opportunities.
 - ✓ AMRUT 2.0, with a huge outlay of over Rs 2.77 lakh crore, will ensure water security in the country, reduce its transportation costs, reduce groundwater contamination, and increase water utilisation capacity.
- **The two-day National round of National Youth Parliament Festival (NYPF) 2022 – was held on March 10 and 11 in the Central Hall of Parliament**
 - ✓ Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Anurag Thakur addressed the inaugural session, while Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla addressed the valedictory function of the Festival
 - ✓ Minister of State of Youth Affairs and Sports Nisith Pramanik distributed the certificates to the participants.

- ✓ The top three National Winners also got an opportunity to speak before the Lok Sabha Speaker during the valedictory function.



- ✓ The objective of the NYPF is to hear the voice of the youth, who will join various careers in the coming years, including public services.
- ✓ National Youth Parliament Festival is conducted based on the idea of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Mann Ki Baat Address on 31st December 2017
- ✓ The 1st edition of NYPF was organized from January 12 to February 27, 2019 with 56 finalists and 88,000 youth representing each district of India
- ✓ The 2nd edition of NYPF was organized from December 23 to January 12, 2021 with 23 lakh youth witnessing the event
- ✓ The 3rd edition of NYPF was launched through virtual mode on February 14, 2022 at the District level.
- ✓ More than 2.44 lakh youth across the country participated in the District Youth Parliaments followed by State Youth Parliaments through virtual mode.
- ✓ A total of 87 winners, 62 females and 25 Male from States and UTs got an opportunity to be present in the Central Hall of Parliament before the dignitaries.
- ✓ A total of 29 winners of State Youth Parliament got an opportunity to speak before the National Jury.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Indian scientists - have designed an electrocatalyst system for energy-efficient hydrogen production with the help of electrolysis of urea**
- ✓ The energy requirement for hydrogen production through water electrolysis can be reduced by 70% through urea electrolysis.
- ✓ Low-cost, earth-abundant Ni-based catalysts are widely applied for this process.
- ✓ The Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology, developed the Nickel oxide (NiOx) based system for producing hydrogen from electro-oxidation of urea.
- ✓ The urea electrolysis is helpful towards urea-based waste treatment with low-cost hydrogen production.

- ✓ India is one of the top countries in urea production, and it produced 244.55 lakh metric tonnes of urea during 2019-20.
- ✓ The nitrogenous fertiliser industries generate a high concentration of ammonia and urea as effluents, which can be utilised for energy production towards our country's benefits

DEFENCE

- **The 9th edition of India – Sri Lanka bilateral maritime exercise named SLINEX (Sri Lanka–India Naval Exercise) - was held at Visakhapatnam between March 7 to 10, 2022**



- ✓ The exercise seeks to enhance interoperability and improve mutual understanding between the navies of the two neighbouring countries in the strategically significant Indian Ocean Region.
 - ✓ It was held in two phases with the first phase, the harbour phase, held at Visakhapatnam on March 7 and 8, followed by the sea phase on March 9 and 10 in the Bay of Bengal.
 - ✓ Sri Lanka Navy is being represented by SLNS Sayurala, an advanced offshore patrol vessel and the Indian Navy by INS Kirch, a guided missile corvette.
 - ✓ Other participants from the Indian Navy include INS Jyoti, a Fleet support tanker, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), Seaking and Chetak Helicopters and Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft.
 - ✓ The various exercises during sea phase will include surface and anti-air weapon firing exercises, seamanship evolutions and aviation operations in sea, while the harbour phase includes professional, cultural, sporting and social exchanges
 - ✓ Another annual feature of India-Sri Lanka military exercise is Mitra Shakti.
 - ✓ The 8th edition of India-Sri Lanka bilateral joint exercise, Mitra Shakti was conducted at Combat Training School, Ampara in Sri Lanka in October last year.
- **The Government has approved the scheme - Modernisation Plan-IV for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in continuation of the scheme “Modernisation Plan-III for CAPFs”**

- ✓ The scheme will run from February 1, 2022 to March 31, 2026 with a total financial outlay of Rs.1,523 crore and will be implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- ✓ Under the scheme, the CAPFs will be equipped with modern state-of-the-art equipment and weapons as per the operational requirements alongwith improved IT solutions.
- ✓ The scheme will also improve the overall operational efficiency and preparedness of the CAPFs and strengthen the government's ability to address difficulties on the international border, LoC, and LAC, as well as in various theatres
- ✓ The seven organizations under the CAPF are the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), National Security Guard (NSG), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), and Special Protection Group (SPG).

ECONOMY

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - has lifted restrictions on the new digital business-generating activities of private lender HDFC Bank under its Digital 2.0 programme**
- ✓ In December 2020, RBI had directed HDFC Bank to temporarily halt all digital launches as well as new sourcing of credit card customers
- ✓ The RBI action came after the bank's customers faced a number of incidents of outages in internet banking, mobile banking, and payment utilities of the bank over the past two years
- ✓ Last year, in August, RBI had partially lifted the ban on HDFC Bank by allowing it to issue new credit cards
- ✓ One of the requirements for lifting the ban was that the bank does an IT audit certifying the adequacy of the internal controls.

APPOINTMENTS

- **On March 11, US President Joe Biden - nominated Shefali Razdan Duggal, a Democratic party activist and fund-raiser, as the US envoy to the Netherlands.**



- ✓ Shefali, an immigrant to the US from Kashmir, India, is an experienced political activist, women's rights advocate, and human rights campaigner
- ✓ In the past Shefali won several civic awards for her service as the National Co-Chair of Women for Biden, and as a Deputy National Finance Chair at the Democratic National Committee.
- ✓ This is the first time a grassroots party activist has been nominated as ambassador to a major country
- ✓ Other Indian-American ambassadors from the US foreign service includes Atul Keshap, till recently the ambassador to Sri Lanka, Geeta Pasi, the ambassador to Ethiopia, and Krishna Urs, who served as the ambassador to Peru
- ✓ Shefali, 50, a Kashmiri who was born in Haridwar and moved to the US with her family when she was two, has been a fund-raiser for the party.
- ✓ She worked for the Obama campaign in 2008 and 2012, and later for the Biden campaign.
- ✓ Her appointment will now have to be confirmed by the US Senate.
- ✓ Incidentally, India's ambassador to the Netherlands, Reenat Sandhu, who took up her post this past week, is the wife of India's ambassador to US Taranjit Sandhu.

AWARDS

- **Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar – recently announced a new award in the name of former Cabinet Minister Late Sushma Swaraj**



- ✓ The award will be given to exemplary women for their significant contribution or achievements in different walks of life in national and international spheres.
- ✓ The Sushma Swaraj Award will carry an award of Rs 5 lakh along with a commendation.
- ✓ Sushma Swaraj, born in Haryana, served as India's Minister of External Affairs during the first Narendra Modi government from 2014 to 2019
- ✓ After Indira Gandhi, she was the second woman to occupy this position.
- ✓ She was elected seven times as a Member of Parliament and three times as a Member of Legislative Assembly.
- ✓ In 1977, at the age of 25, she became the youngest cabinet minister in the state of Haryana.
- ✓ Swaraj also served as Delhi's 5th Chief Minister for a brief period in 1998, and also became the city's first female Chief Minister.

SPORTS

- **India's veteran seamer Jhulan Goswami - became the all-time highest wicket-taker in the history of the Women's World Cup in her 5th world cup**



- ✓ With 40 scalps, Goswami has surpassed Australia's Lynette Fullston, who took 39 wickets during her career spanning six years from 1982 to 1988.
 - ✓ Goswami achieved the feat by dismissing Anisa Mohammed in the Women's ODI World Cup match against West Indies at the Seddon Park in Hamilton on March 12
 - ✓ During the match, India crossed a score of 300 for the first time in the history of the tournament
 - ✓ Meanwhile, **India's ODI skipper Mithali Raj broke the record for most matches captained in the ICC Women's World Cup**, surpassing former Australian counterpart Belinda Clark.
 - ✓ Mithali, 39, led the country in 24 World Cup games, claiming 14 victories, 8 losses and one no result.
 - ✓ Clark had captained her side in 23 matches.
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- **On March 12, Prime Minister Narendra Modi - inaugurated the 11th edition of Khel Mahakumbh at Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad, Gujarat**
 - ✓ The Governor of Gujarat, Acharya Devvrat, and Chief Minister of Gujarat, Bhupendrabhai Patel were among those present on the occasion.
 - ✓ During his speech, PM Modi mentioned about the first National Sports University established in Manipur in 2018
 - ✓ He also mentioned that Major Dhyan Chand Sports University for higher education in sports will soon be functional at Meerut in Uttar Pradesh.
 - ✓ Khel Mahakumbh is an annual sports competition organized by the Gujarat government.
 - ✓ It was started in 2010 with 16 sports and 13 lakh participants when Narendra Modi was the chief minister of Gujarat.



- ✓ In the first Khel Mahakumbh, Gujarat started the mega event with 13 lakh players in 16 sports.
- ✓ In the Khel Mahakumbh held in 2019, this participation reached to 40 lakh players, who participated in 36 general sports and 26 para sports
- ✓ Over 55 lakh sportspersons have registered for the 11th edition of Khel Mahakumbh.