NEXT IAS

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 03-09-2024

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ASIAN CITIES ARE GROWING UPWARDS MORE THAN OUTWARDS

Context

- A new study published in Nature Cities has found that Cities around the world, especially in Asia, are growing upwards faster than they are spreading outwards.

About

- The cities with populations in excess of **10 million people** had more prominent vertical growth, and this effect became more pronounced in the **2010s.**

- Indian cities did not show a uniform upward growth, with only the large ones with more than **5 million** people showing upward and outward or just outward growth, mostly in the 2010s.

- **China, Japan, South Korea and other east Asian countries** have experienced one of the most dramatic urban transformations in the world, characterized by the rapid proliferation of high-rise buildings, particularly in its major cities.

  - **Cities like Shanghai, Shenzhen, Beijing, and Guangzhou** are known for their impressive skylines filled with high-rise buildings and skyscrapers.

- In India, Cities like **Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, and Chennai** are seeing a significant increase in vertical development.

Reason for upward growth in cities

- **Global Urbanization Trends:** The world is becoming increasingly urbanized, with more people living in cities than in rural areas. To manage this population shift, cities are expanding upwards rather than outwards.

- **High Land Costs:** As land prices rise in urban centers, building upwards becomes more economically viable than expanding horizontally.

- **Improved Construction Techniques:** Advances in engineering and construction technology have made it easier and safer to build taller structures.

  - Innovations in materials, design, and construction methods have enabled cities to grow vertically.

- **Changing Lifestyles:** Urban residents, especially younger generations, are increasingly drawn to the **convenience and amenities** offered by high-rise living, such as proximity to work, shopping, and entertainment.

Advantages of the Vertical Shift in Urban Growth

- Taller buildings allow more people to live in a smaller area, making **better use of limited urban land**.

  - This can reduce urban sprawl, preserving green spaces and agricultural land outside city limits.

- Concentrating populations in vertical developments can lead to **more efficient delivery of public services** such as transportation, waste management, and utilities.

- Vertical cities can reduce the need for long commutes, as people live closer to work, **reducing traffic congestion** and **lowering greenhouse gas emissions.**

- Taller buildings, particularly when **designed with green technologies,** can be more **energy-efficient and sustainable** compared to low-density urban development.

Disadvantages of the Vertical Shift in Urban Growth

- The rise of vertical development leads to **gentrification,** displacing lower-income populations and increasing social inequality.

- Existing infrastructure, such as roads, sewage systems, and public transportation, may not be equipped to handle the increased density, leading to **overcrowding and potential breakdowns in services.**

- High-rise buildings can create **urban heat islands**, where the concentration of concrete and lack of green space raise local temperatures, affecting the microclimate.

- Taller buildings pose challenges for emergency services like **firefighting and evacuation,** especially in the event of natural disasters.

- Residents of high-rise buildings **experience social isolation**, as vertical living can reduce opportunities for neighborly interactions compared to more horizontal, community-based urban designs.

Concluding remarks

- The high-rise building trend is a response to the challenges of rapid urbanization, land scarcity, and the need for sustainable urban development.

- While vertical growth offers many advantages, it also presents challenges that must be carefully managed.

- The future of high-rise development will likely involve a balance between economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability, with a focus on creating livable, resilient urban environments.

Source: TH

SUPREME COURT'S WORDS AGAINST BULLDOZER JUSTICE

Context

- The Supreme Court has expressed disapproval over "bulldozer justice" where houses of accused individuals are demolished.

What is 'bulldozer justice'?

- 'Bulldozer justice', also known as bulldozer politics, refers to the practice of **using the heavy-duty piece of machinery to demolish houses of alleged criminals,** communal violence rioters and accused criminals.

- As part of 'bulldozer justice', houses, shops and small establishments have been bulldozed across India, especially in the states of **Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Assam and Maharashtra.**

Supreme Court Ruling

- The Supreme Court stated that **no property can be demolished** just because the accused is involved in a criminal offense.
  - Even if he is a convict, still it can't be done without following the procedure as prescribed by law.

- The court underscored the importance of **due process and natural justice** before any demolitions are carried out and expressed the need for nationwide guidelines to address this issue.

Issues with Bulldozer Justice

- **Targeting Marginalized Communities:** Bulldozer justice disproportionately impacts marginalized and minority communities, perpetuating existing inequalities and social divisions.

- **Undermining the Rule of Law:** Bulldozer justice bypasses established legal processes, undermining the principles of rule of law and due process, which erode public trust in political institutions.

- **Violation of Human Rights:** The practice of bulldozer justice often violates basic human rights, including the right to shelter and protection from arbitrary state action.
  - The lack of resettlement or compensation for those evicted raises serious ethical concerns.

- **Ethical issues:** Bulldozer justice conflates the roles of judge, jury, and executioner, leading to unjust outcomes. Punishments should be proportional and directed at the guilty, not innocent family members.

- **Psychological Trauma:** The sudden and often violent nature of demolitions can cause significant psychological trauma, not just for the individuals directly affected, but for entire communities.

Way Ahead

- Bulldozer Justice creates a **culture of fear and retribution,** where people are punished without a fair trial in which they can defend themselves.

- This approach is fundamentally **at odds with the principles of justice and the rule of law,** the ethos India's founding fathers considered to be an essential component of a civilized democracy.

- In a democratic society, justice should not be about retribution, and punitive measures should be aimed at **reforming the guilty.**

What is Retributive justice?

- It is a theory of justice that emphasizes punishment as the primary response to wrongdoing.

- According to this theory, when someone commits a crime, they deserve to be punished in proportion to the severity of their offense.

- The underlying principle is that punishment should be morally appropriate to the crime committed, reflecting a balance between the harm done by the offender and the suffering they are made to endure as a consequence.

Challenges with the Retributive Justice

- **Backward-looking:** Unlike other theories of justice that focus on future outcomes (such as deterrence or rehabilitation), it focuses on responding to past wrongdoing.

- **Harsh Punishments:** If not carefully implemented, retributive justice can lead to excessively harsh punishments, especially in cases where the concept of proportionality is not well-defined

Source: IE

MITOCHONDRIAL TREATMENT FOR PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Context

- Recent research has identified a key protein that could **lead to new treatments for Parkinson's disease and other brain conditions.**

About

- Researchers who studyParkinson's disease have been investigating **the role that mitochondria** – the powerhouses that fuel cells – play in Parkinson's.
- Researchers have identified **a key protein** that could lead to new treatments for Parkinson's disease and other brain conditions.

Mitochondrial Dynamics and Neurodegeneration

- Emerging studies have linked **imbalances in mitochondrial processes** to different neurodegenerative diseases, including Parkinson's disease.
  - Impaired mitochondrial dynamics also take down the cell's cleaning and waste recycling processes, leading to a pileup of toxic proteins that form harmful aggregates inside the cell.
  - In Parkinson's, the presence of these toxic protein aggregates is a hallmark of the disease.

Parkinson's Disease

- Parkinson's Disease (PD) is a **neurodegenerative disorder** that disrupts the brain's ability to produce **dopamine**, a vital neurotransmitter responsible for movement control.
  - PD gets worse over time. There is no cure, but therapies and medicines can reduce symptoms.
- **Common symptoms include** tremors, painful muscle contractions and difficulty speaking.
  - Parkinson disease results in high rates of disability and the need for care. Many people with PD also develop dementia.
- **The disease usually occurs in older people,** but younger people can also be affected. Men are affected more often than women.
- **In 1817, a British physician named James Parkinson** published An Essay on the Shaking Palsy, describing for the first time, cases of a neurodegenerative disorder now known as Parkinson's disease.

- Today, Parkinson's disease is the **second most common neurodegenerative** disease in the U.S.
  - It affects about 1 million Americans and more than 10 million people worldwide.

Parkinson Disease in India

- In India, the **rising life expectancy** and growing population are contributing to an increased burden of PD.
- In contrast to western countries, India grapples with a significant obstacle—PD typically **manifests at a younger age**, hitting individuals around 51 years old, roughly a decade earlier.
  - This early onset has profound implications, impacting individuals during their prime working years.
  - Additionally, the scarcity of neurologists, especially in rural areas, frequently results in **delayed diagnosis and insufficient initial treatment.**
- **The Union health ministry** has decided to offer **neurological care at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs**, the government's primary healthcare centres, to combat the increasing incidence of neurological disorders such as Parkinson's, epilepsy and dementia among Indians.

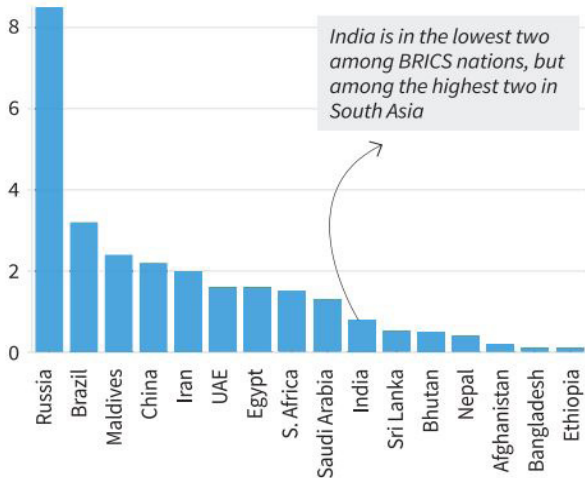**Source: TH**

RISING DEMAND FOR MENTAL HEALTHCARE IN INDIA

Context

- The **demand for mental healthcare is increasing** in India due to shifts in attitudes over the years.
  - The numbers indicate that accessibility to mental healthcare has become stagnant, there seems to be an increase in awareness and a decrease in stigma towards it.

Lack of Psychiatrists in India

- The World Health Organization's guidelines state that there should be at least **three practising psychiatrists per one lakh population.**
- As per the latest National Mental Health Survey (NMHS), which was conducted between 2015 and 2016, **India has only 0.75 psychiatrists per 1 lakh population.**
- In its 2023 report, 'Mental Healthcare and Its Management in Contemporary Times,' the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare stated that there were 9,000 working psychiatrists in India at the time.

- ◆ If the goal is to have three psychiatrists per one lakh population, **India would require 36,000.**

India is in the lowest two among BRICS nations, but among the highest two in South Asia

(Bar chart: Russia, Brazil, Maldives, China, Iran, UAE, Egypt, S. Africa, Saudi Arabia, India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia)

- Among the **BRICS nations,** India is one of the two countries with the lowest number of psychiatrists per capita; the other is Ethiopia.
- About 1,000 psychiatrists enter the workforce every year.
  - ◆ Keeping aside factors such as attrition and unemployment, it would take India about **27 years to meet the WHO-recommended goal.**
  - ◆ If India wants to achieve this mark earlier, it requires policy intervention with adequate incentives to increase supply.

Causes of Mental Illness

- Exposure to **unfavorable social, economic, geopolitical and environmental circumstances** – including poverty, violence, inequality and environmental deprivation.
- Over the past few years, **the pandemic-led lockdowns and the uncertainties associated** with them have had a detrimental effect on mental well-being
- Early adverse life experiences, such as **trauma or a history of abuse** (for example, child abuse, sexual assault, witnessing violence, etc.)
- Use of **alcohol or drugs, having feelings of loneliness or isolation**, etc.
- **Family Dynamics:** Dysfunctional family relationships and lack of support systems can negatively impact mental health.

Issues and Concerns

- Mental health problems have been **growing rapidly** over the last few decades.

- National Mental Health Survey, 2015-16, showed mental disorders at **10.6 percent among above 18-year-olds, 16 percent among the productive age group of 30-49-year-olds** and lifetime morbidity affecting 150 million people with one percent reporting high suicidal risk.
- The human resources and treatment facilities are **low.**
- There is a lack of prioritizing mental health among policymakers.

Government of India Initiatives

- **National Mental Health Programme (NMHP):** Launched in 1982, this program aims to improve mental health services through community-based approaches, enhance mental health care at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, and raise awareness.
- **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017:** The act **decriminalised suicide attempts** in India and also included WHO guidelines in the categorisation of mental illnesses.
  - ◆ The most significant provision in the act was **"advanced directives",** which allowed individuals with mental illnesses to decide the course of their treatment.
  - ◆ It also **restricted the use of electro-convulsive therapy (ECT),** and banned its use on minors, finally introducing measures to tackle stigma in Indian society.
- **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2017:** The Act acknowledges mental illness as a disability and seeks to enhance the Rights and Entitlements of the Disabled.
- **Manodarpan Initiative:** An initiative under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, aims to **provide psycho-social support to students** for their mental health and well-being.
- **Kiran Helpline:** The helpline is a **step towards suicide prevention,** and can help with support and crisis management.
- **National Tele-Mental Health Programme:** Launched in 2022, this initiative aims to provide mental health services through telemedicine, expanding access to care, especially in underserved and remote areas.

Way Forward

- There is a need for an urgent and well-resourced **whole-of-society approach** to protect, promote and care for the mental health of people.

- ◆ **Killing the deep stigma surrounding mental health issues** which prevents patients from seeking timely treatment.
- **Making mental health an integral part of the public health programme:** to help screen and identify high-risk groups and strengthen mental health interventions like counselling services.
- **Special emphasis on schools:** Pay special attention to groups that are highly vulnerable to mental health issues such as children facing domestic or sexual violence.
- **Affordable Services:** All government health assurance schemes, including Ayushman Bharat can cover the widest possible range of mental health conditions.

Source: TH

INDIA'S SEMICONDUCTOR PUSH

In News

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved Kaynes Semicon Pvt Ltd's proposal to set up a **semiconductor unit in Sanand, Gujarat.**

About

- The unit will be established with an investment of Rs 3,300 crore.
- It will have the capacity to produce 60 lakh chips per day.
- Chips produced will serve various sectors including industrial, automotive, electric vehicles, consumer electronics, telecom, and mobile phones.
  - ◆ In June 2023, the Union Cabinet approved the first semiconductor unit in Sanand, Gujarat.
  - ◆ In February 2024, three additional semiconductor units were approved.

Semiconductor Ecosystem

- Semiconductors are essential components in various modern technologies, from smartphones to medical devices and vehicles.
  - ◆ Surge in semiconductor demand due to widespread 5G adoption, rising cryptocurrency mining, and government digitization efforts.
- Currently, about 70% of the world's semiconductor manufacturing is concentrated in South Korea, Taiwan, China, the United States, and Japan.

- There is a global shift away from China's dominance due to geopolitical pressures and supply chain vulnerabilities.

Status in India

- India relies on imports to meet its semiconductor device needs due to the lack of domestic fabrication facilities.
  - ◆ In 2022, the Indian semiconductor market was valued at US$ 26.3 billion and is projected to expand at a CAGR of 26.3% to US$ 271.9 billion by 2032.
- India is starting to establish itself in the international semiconductor market and could become a significant hub for semiconductor manufacturing in the future.
- India has a significant advantage in semiconductor design and intellectual labor.
- Many global semiconductor design engineers are of Indian origin, and companies like Intel and NVIDIA have large facilities in India.
- The semiconductor industry in India is advancing rapidly, with companies like Tata Group projecting that commercial production from their Gujarat and Assam plants will commence by 2026.
  - ◆ This comes in response to the global chip shortages experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the strategic importance of self-reliant semiconductor manufacturing.

Challenges

- India faces challenges in becoming a semiconductor superpower due to high costs of land, power, and labor, which have previously discouraged investors.
- Unavailability of trained workers
- Another major challenge is the creation of an ecosystem for ancillary industries.
- Lack of ancillary industry becomes a disability for companies which want to set up units in India.

Government Initiatives:

- **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) :** It is a specialized and independent Business Division within the Digital India Corporation
  - ◆ It aims to build a vibrant semiconductor and display ecosystem to enable India's emergence as a global hub for electronics manufacturing and design.

- **The 'Make in India' initiative (2014)** aims to enhance manufacturing and establish India as a global manufacturing hub.

- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme:** Offers incentive packages to companies setting up semiconductor manufacturing facilities in India.
  - Aims to boost semiconductor production and create direct and indirect job opportunities.

- **Additional Schemes:** Design Linked Incentive (DLI): Supports semiconductor design efforts.
  - Chips to Startup (C2S): Promotes semiconductor startups.
  - Scheme for Promotion of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS): Supports electronic components and semiconductor manufacturing.

- The government plans to increase the **funding outlay for the second phase of its chip manufacturing incentive policy** to $15 billion from the $10 billion it had committed for the first phase.

- The Union Cabinet was apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2023 between the Government of Republic of India and the European Commission on Working Arrangements on Semiconductors Ecosystems, its supply chain and innovation under the framework of EU-India Trade and Technology Council (TTC).

Conclusion and Way Forward

- India is set for significant growth in the semiconductor industry due to strategic initiatives and partnerships.

- To become a major player, India needs to focus on manufacturing precision at the atomic level, learning from leaders like Taiwan, Korea, and Japan.

- As the Prime Minister emphasized, "India will soon start commercial production of semiconductors and related products and become a global power in this sector," signaling the nation's ambitious drive towards technological self-sufficiency under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiatives.

- With sustained efforts and a proactive stance, India is on course to solidify its position as a leading semiconductor manufacturing hub, contributing majorly to technological advancement and economic growth.

Source:PIB

DIGITAL AGRICULTURE MISSION

Context

- Recently, the Union Cabinet Committee approved the **Digital Agriculture Mission** with an outlay of **Rs. 2817 Crore,** including the central share of Rs. 1940 Crore.

About the Digital Agriculture Mission

- It aims **to nurture agri-tech start-ups** by harnessing cutting-edge advancements in cloud computing, earth observation, remote sensing, data analytics, and artificial intelligence/machine learning models.

- It is conceived as **an umbrella scheme to support digital agriculture initiatives,** such as creating Digital Public Infrastructure, implementing the Digital General Crop Estimation Survey (DGCES), and taking up other IT initiatives by the Central Government, State Governments, and Academic and Research Institutions.

Mission's Roots

- At its core, DAM seeks to transform India's agricultural landscape by infusing it with digital nutrients.

- **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for Agriculture:** It aims to provide authenticated demographic details, land holdings, and crop information for cultivators and tenant farmers.
  - It's like giving each farmer a digital identity (akin to Aadhaar) – a trusted **'Kisan ki Pehchaan' (a digital Farmer ID)** – while connecting them to relevant state and central government databases.
  - This data-driven approach promises innovative, farmer-centric services.

Three Pillars of Digital Agriculture Mission

- **Agristack:** The farmer's digital toolbox. It's a federated structure, collaboratively built by various agencies of both central and state governments. Agristack houses **three foundational registries:**
  - **Farmers' Registry**: A virtual farmer directory.
  - **Geo-referenced Village Maps:** For every village, with crop details overlaid.
  - **Crop Sown Registry:** A digital ledger of what's sprouting where.

- **Krishi Decision Support System:** It provides timely and reliable information to farmers, helping them make informed decisions. It aims to create

a comprehensive geospatial system to unify remote sensing-based information on Crops, Soil, Weather, water resources, etc.

- **Soil Profile Mapping:** It maps soil properties, moisture levels, and nutrient content, empowering precision agriculture.

Other schemes to improve farmers' lives and increase their incomes

- **Crop science for food and nutritional security:** It aims to prepare farmers for climate resilience and provide for **food security by 2047.**
  - Total outlay of Rs 3,979 crore
  - It has **following pillars** viz: *Research and education; Plant genetic resource management; Genetic improvement for food and fodder crop; Pulse and oilseed crop improvement; Improvement of commercial crops; and Research on insects, microbes, pollinators etc.*
- **Strengthening Agricultural Education, Management and Social Sciences:** It aims to prepare agriculture students and researchers for current challenges.
  - Total outlay of Rs 2,291 Crore
  - It comprises the following: *Under Indian Council of Agri Research; Modernising agri-research and education; In line with New Education Policy 2020; Use latest technology like Digital DPI, AI, big data, remote, etc; and Include natural farming and climate resilience.*
- **Sustainable livestock health and production:** It aims to increase farmers income from livestock and dairy.
  - Total outlay of Rs 1,702 crore
  - It comprises the following: *Animal health management and veterinary education; Dairy production and technology development; Animal genetic resource management, production and improvement; and Animal nutrition and small ruminant production and development.*
- **Sustainable development of Horticulture:** It aims at increasing farmers' income from horticulture plants.
  - Total outlay of Rs 1129.30 crore
  - It comprises the following: *Tropical, sub-tropical and temperate horticulture crops; Root, tuber, bulbous and arid crops; Vegetable, floriculture, and mushroom*

crops; and Plantation, spices, medicinal, and aromatic plants.

- **Strengthening of Krishi Vigyan Kendra with an outlay of Rs 1,202 Cr**
- **Natural Resource Management with an outlay of Rs 1,115 Cr**

Significances of Digital Agriculture Mission

- **Efficient Services:** Farmers will access services and schemes faster, like a well-timed monsoon shower.
- **Data-Driven Insights:** AI-powered crop predictions and personalised advice are helpful for better interventions and future policy support.
- **Inclusive Growth and Employment:** It is aiming to have a catalytic effect in creating both direct and indirect employment in the agriculture sector, and is expected to provide employment opportunities to about **2.5 lakh trained local youth and Krishi Sakhis.**
- **Resilience:** When pests strike or drought looms, DAM will be the farmer's digital scarecrow, alerting them in advance.

Conclusion

- As the sun rises on DAM, India's agri-tech landscape blossoms. It's not just about bytes and algorithms; it's about nurturing the roots that feed our nation.
- **Digital Agriculture Mission** aligns with this grand vision – nurturing a developed India by 2047 **(Viksit Bharat@2047).**

Source: PIB

═══ NEWS IN SHORT ═══

GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTES 23RD LAW COMMISSION

Context

- President Droupadi Murmu has sanctioned the constitution of the 23rd Law Commission of India, which will serve from September 1, 2024, to August 31, 2027.

Law Commission of India

- Law Commission of India is a **non-statutory body.**

- **It is constituted by** a notification of the Government of India, Ministry of Law & Justice, Department of Legal Affairs.
- It is constituted with definite terms of reference to carry out research in the field of law.
- The Commission makes **recommendations to the Government** in the form of Reports as per its terms of reference.
    - However these **recommendations are not binding** on the Government.

Origin

- **Pre- independence:** The first Law Commission was established during colonial rule in India by the East India Company under the **Charter Act of 1833** and was presided over by **Lord Macaulay.**
    - The First Law Commission drafted the **Penal Code in 1837**, the **Limitation Law in 1842** and the **Scheme of Pleading and Procedure in 1848.**
    - After that, **three more commissions** were established in pre-independent India.
- **Post-independence:** The first law commission in independent India was established in **1955**, with its chairman **M.C.Setalvad.**

Constitution of the 23nd Law Commission

- The Commission will consist of;
    - A full-time Chairperson;
    - four full-time Members (including Member-Secretary);
    - Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs as ex officio Member;
    - Secretary, Legislative Department as ex officio Member; and not more than five part-time Members.

Source: BL

INDIA'S SPECIAL CHINA PROBLEM

Context

- The External Affairs Minister has said that **India has a special China problem** above the world's general China problem.

About

- The comments come days after diplomatic-level talks — the **31st meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC)** was held in Beijing on the border situation.

- The two sides agreed on "**intensified contact through diplomatic and military channels**".
- The expression "**narrow down the differences**" had been used for the first time in the bilateral talks on the border standoff and, in diplomatic parlance, indicates progress in the negotiations.
- The **border standoff** has been ongoing for more than five years now and two sides have each deployed around 50,000-60,000 troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.
    - Friction points such as Galwan Valley, north and south banks of Pangong Tso and the Gogra-Hot Springs area, have seen some resolution since the beginning of the standoff with the creation of buffer zones along the LAC.
    - The **last formal disengagement along the LAC** took place in 2022, when both sides pulled back troops to disengage from Patrolling Point-15 in the Gogra-Hot Springs area of eastern Ladakh.

Source: IE

ESHRAM PORTAL

Context

- Recently, eShram portal achieved over 30 crore registrations in the span of just 3 years after launch.

About the eShram Portal

- It was launched by the **Ministry of Labour & Employment** on 26th August 2021.
- It is a comprehensive **National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW)** that primarily targets **unorganised workers**, including those in sectors like construction, agriculture, domestic work, and street vending.
- There are **no income criteria** for registering on e-Shram as an unorganised worker. However, the **worker should not be an income tax payee.**
- Workers will be provided with an **e-SHRAM card** which will have a **12 digit unique number.**
    - **Universal Account Number (UAN)** is a 12 digit number uniquely assigned to each unorganised worker after registration on the e-Shram portal.
    - **UAN is a permanent number** i.e., once assigned, it will remain unchanged for any worker.

- The government envisions eShram as a comprehensive **'One-Stop-Solution'.** It means integrating various social security schemes into the portal, making it easier for workers to access benefits.

- **Major schemes** like Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), and more are **being linked to eShram**. It ensures that eligible workers don't miss out on essential services.

- It focuses on **integrating eShram with Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH)**, allowing seamless registration and access to services across both platforms.

Source: PIB

RASHTRIYA POSHAN MAAH 2024

Context

- THe Union Minister of Women and Child Development launched the seventh edition of nationwide "Rashtriya Poshan Mah "at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar.

About Poshan Maah

- It is promoting community mobilization through **people's participation for addressing malnutrition** amongst young children and women.
  - The initiative is ensuring health and nutrition for everyone.
- **It will focus on the themes** of Anaemia, Growth Monitoring, Complementary Feeding, Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi, Technology for better Governance, and Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam.

Mission Poshan 2.0

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development through its **Mission Poshan 2.0,** is committed to fight malnutrition among children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers across the country".

- The Poshan Maah aims to intensify efforts to combat malnutrition and promote holistic well being across the nation.

Source: AIR

MEASURES FOR THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

In News

- The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DoSJE) is seeking inputs from stakeholders and the public to ensure inclusive and effective policies for the LGBTQIA+ community.

About LGBTQIA+ community

- The acronym 'LGBTIQA+' is a continuously evolving term that encompasses various identities within the community.

- It stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and others .

Initiatives

- **In 2018,** the Supreme Court decriminalized homosexuality by partially striking down **Section 377 of the Indian Penal Cod**e.

- **Same-Sex Union**s: In October 2023, the Supreme Court rejected the plea to legalize same-sex unions, leaving the status of such unions unrecognized.
  - Indian courts have acknowledged the right of same-sex couples to cohabit, but they do not have legal recognition for same-sex unions or marriages.

- **Supreme Court Judgment:** In 2023, the Supreme Court directed the formation of a committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary to define and elucidate entitlements for the queer community.

- The sub-committee met to address discrimination and access to social welfare, healthcare, and public services.
  - Advisories were issued on prison visitation rights and law enforcement measures to protect the queer community.

- **Ration Cards:** The Department of Food and Public Distribution issued an advisory to treat partners in queer relationships as part of the same household for ration cards.

- **Bank Accounts:** The Department of Financial Services clarified that queer individuals can open joint bank accounts and nominate partners as beneficiaries.

- **Healthcare:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare issued guidelines on healthcare rights,

including awareness activities, prohibition of conversion therapy, sex reassignment surgery, and teleconsultation.

- **Medical Interventions**: Guidelines were framed for medical interventions for intersex children and the Ministry is working on mental health guidelines for the queer community.
- **The "SMILE - Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise" scheme** was launched on February 12, 2022.
  - Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons: Focuses on the welfare and rehabilitation of transgender individuals.
- **The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019**, section 13 provides that every educational institution funded or recognized by the appropriate Government shall provide inclusive education and opportunities for sports, recreation and leisure activities to transgender persons without discrimination on an equal basis with others.

Source:TH

AGRISURE FUND & KRISHI NIVESH PORTAL

In News

The Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister launched the AgriSURE Fund and Krishi Nivesh Portal in New Delhi.

- He also conferred AIF Excellence Awards to the top-performing Banks and States under various categories in recognition and appreciation of their efforts.

About

- **AgriSURE Fund**: It aims to support start-ups and agripreneurs in the agriculture and allied sectors.
  - The fund will provide both equity and debt support.
  - The fund will support sector-specific, sector-agnostic, and debt AIFs.
  - It will also offer direct equity support to start-ups.
  - Focus: Investments will target high-risk, high-impact activities within the agriculture value chain.

- The initiative aims to foster innovation and sustainability in India's agricultural sector.
- **Krishi Nivesh Portal:** It aims to boost agricultural investment in India.
  - The portal will serve as an integrated, centralized platform.
  - It aims to provide a one-stop solution for agri-investors.
  - The portal will help investors access various government schemes and benefits.

> **Do you know ?**
> - Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) Scheme was launched in 2020.
> - **Objective**: Aims to create post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets.
>   - Special campaigns are conducted to promote the AIF scheme.

Source:PIB

OPERATION BHEDIYA

Context

- The Uttar Pradesh government has launched **Operation Bhediya** to capture a pack of wolves in Bahraich district.
  - The forest department has initiated an innovative effort of using colourful teddy dolls soaked in children's urine as bait to capture them.

About

- The recently swelling Ghahghara river surfing jungles have **disrupted their original habitat.**
- **Year 1997** saw the biggest-ever wolf attack in UP that led to the deaths of 42 children in Jaunpur.
- Indian wolves have been known to act as **scavengers**, preying on dead livestocks.
  - However, they are known to feed on livestock when natural prey is scarce. The animals also have a history of preying on children.
- The exact numbers of the Indian wolf are not known, though estimates suggest there are between 2,000 and 3,000 individuals across Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka.
  - **IUCN Status: Least Concern**
  - Wolf is categorised as Schedule-I under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

- Chief wildlife warden of a state has the authority to permit hunting of such animals becoming dangerous to human life or disabled or diseased beyond recovery, under Section 11 (1) (a) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Source: TH

HAYAO MIYAZAKI WON MAGSAYSAY AWARD (2024)

Context

- Hayao Miyazaki, the acclaimed Japanese animator and co-founder of Studio Ghibli, has been honoured with the Ramon Magsaysay Award of 2024.

About the Ramon Magsaysay Award

- It is **Asia's premier prize and highest honour** which recognises greatness of spirit shown in selfless service to the peoples of Asia.

- It is often referred to as **Asia's Nobel Prize** that recognises outstanding contributions to various fields, including environmental protection and peace.

- **Awardees** are annually selected by the **Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) board of trustees**

- It recognises and honours individuals and organisations in Asia, regardless of race, creed, gender, or nationality, who have achieved distinction and have helped others generously without aiming for public recognition.

Background

- This award is presented in **formal ceremonies in Manila, Philippines on August 31st,** the birth anniversary of the much-esteemed Philippine President whose ideas inspired the Award's creation in 1957.

  - Ramon Magsaysay was the **Third President of the Philippines** after World War II.

Indian in the list

- Vinoba Bhave in 1958; Mother Teresa in 1962; Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay in 1966; Satyajit Ray in 1967; Mahasweta Devi in 1997; Arvind Kejriwal in 2006; Anshu Gupta of Goonj in 2015; Bezwada Wilson (human rights activist) in 2016; and Ravish Kumar (journalist) in 2019.

Source: IE

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