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Time: 45 Min

Date: 25-10-2024

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COMPETENCY MODEL FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

Context

- The Capacity Building Commission (CBC), has developed the Karmayogi Competency Model for civil servants.

About

- It is a framework of behavioral and functional competencies designed to aid their transition **from a karmachari (employee) to a karmayogi (dedicated worker).**

- The model aims to optimize deployment of officials to roles based on their competencies, which are also mapped to courses on the **Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) portal.**

Components of the Competency Model

- The model consists of **34 competencies**, categorized as **behavioral and functional.**

- **Behavioral Competencies:** There are 13 behavioral competencies, further divided into two sub-categories;
  - Core Competencies
  - Leadership Competencies

- **Key behavioral competencies include:** Self-awareness, Personal effectiveness, Creativity and innovation and Strategic leadership.
  - These competencies are inspired by four resolutions that every public official should embody: Vikas (Development), Garva (Pride), Kartavya (Duty) and Ekta (Unity).

- **Functional Competencies:** There are 21 functional competencies, which focus on skills required to effectively perform specific roles in governance.
  - **Key functional competencies include:** Citizen-centricity, Policy architecture, Digital fluency, Financial management and Data analytics.

Mission Karmayogi National Program

- It is a flagship programme of Government of India **launched in 2020** for training of civil servants, which intends to transform the Civil Services from '**Rule Based' to 'Role Based'** way of functioning and Citizen Centric.

- **Mission Karmayogi has the following six pillars;**
  - Policy Framework,
  - Institutional Framework,
  - Competency Framework,
  - Digital Learning Framework (Integrated Government Online Training Karmayogi Platform (iGOT-Karmayogi),
  - Electronic Human Resource Management System (e-HRMS), and
  - Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Key Features of Mission Karmayogi

- **Capacity Building Commission (CBC):** CBC monitors and reviews the implementation of capacity-building programs, aligning them with the objectives of Mission Karmayogi.
  - The CBC was established in **April 2021** and is uniquely staffed with representation from the private sector and the civil society.

- **iGOT (Integrated Government Online Training) Platform:** This digital platform provides anytime, anywhere training, enabling civil servants to access personalized learning paths based on their roles and skill gaps.

- **Annual Capacity Building Plans (ACBP):** Each government department creates and implements its own capacity-building plans in alignment with its priorities and objectives.

- **Role-based Competency Framework:** The training is designed to develop role-based competencies in civil servants, focusing on specific skills required for their respective functions.

Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) portal

- It is being developed as an integral part of the **Digital India stack** for capacity building of all government employees.

- It aims to provide '**anytime-anywhere-any device'** learning to train around 2.0 crores users which was so far unachievable through traditional measures.

- It is envisioned to evolve into a vibrant and world class marketplace for content modeled on FRACs.

- Supported by a robust e-learning content industry the content can be curated by individual government ministries or organizations.

Conclusion

- Mission Karmayogi seeks to transform India's civil services, making them better prepared and citizen-oriented, ultimately contributing to the nation's ambitious goals.

- It is a transformative initiative that empowers civil servants to drive India's progress. By nurturing citizen-centric, tech-savvy Karmayogis, we pave the way for a **Viksit Bharat by 2047.**

Source: IE

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ROAD SAFETY

Context

- The Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways, addressed the **12th edition of the Traffic InfraTech Expo.**
  - He emphasized the critical need to improve road safety and the **adoption of advanced technologies** in the transportation sector.

About

- India experiences around **5 lakh accidents each year,** resulting in numerous fatalities.
  - More than half of these casualties are in the age group of **18-36 years.**
  - The economic loss due to road accidents is estimated at **3% of the country's GDP.**
- The government has decided to appoint **experts from the private sector** to collaborate on developing technological solutions.
  - It will evaluate proposals from startups and industry leaders, ensuring that the best ideas are implemented.
  - The committee has been directed to finalize its evaluations within **three months.**

Use of Technology in Transport Sector

- **Traffic Management:** AI systems analyze real-time traffic data to optimize signal timings, reduce congestion, and improve overall traffic flow.
  - This can lead to fewer accidents caused by gridlock or unpredictable traffic patterns.
- **Predictive Analytics:** By analyzing historical accident data, AI can identify high-risk areas and times, allowing authorities to implement targeted safety measures.
- **Driver Assistance Systems:** AI is integrated into vehicle systems to provide features like lane departure warnings, collision avoidance, and adaptive cruise control.
- **Emergency Response:** AI systems can optimize routes for emergency vehicles, ensuring quicker response times during accidents, which can be crucial for saving lives.
- **Identifying traffic violations** through AI can allow authorities to **enforce penalties accurately.**
- **Upgrading toll collection methods**, including the exploration of satellite toll systems would improve **efficiency and ensure transparency in toll collection.**

Challenges

- **Infrastructure Limitations:** Many areas lack the necessary infrastructure, such as reliable internet connectivity and adequate sensor networks, to support AI technologies effectively.
- **Data Privacy Concerns:** The collection and analysis of large volumes of traffic and personal data raise concerns about privacy and data security.
- **Quality of Data:** The quality of traffic and accident data in India varies significantly, making it difficult to develop reliable AI systems.
- **Integration with Existing Systems:** Integrating AI solutions with existing traffic management systems and regulatory frameworks can be complex and require significant investment.
- **Skill Gaps:** There is a shortage of skilled professionals in AI and data analytics within India.
  - This limits the ability to develop, implement, and maintain AI systems effectively.
- **Ethical Considerations:** The deployment of AI in critical areas like traffic management raises ethical questions, such as bias in algorithms and accountability in case of failures or accidents.

Way Ahead

- **Data Standardization:** Establish standard protocols for data collection and sharing among various stakeholders.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between government agencies, private companies, and academic institutions to leverage resources, expertise, and technology for developing AI solutions.
- **Skill Development Programs:** Implement training programs to build a workforce skilled in AI, data analytics, and machine learning.
- **Pilot Projects:** Launch pilot projects in select cities to test AI applications in real-world scenarios.
- **Ethical Guidelines:** Establish ethical guidelines for AI development and deployment, focusing on transparency, accountability, and bias mitigation to ensure fair treatment and public trust.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Create channels for public feedback on AI systems and road safety initiatives, allowing for continuous improvement based on user experiences and concerns.

Source: PIB

WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARDIZATION ASSEMBLY 2024

Context

- Recently the International Telecommunications Union - World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (ITU-WTSA 2024) concluded in New Delhi.

What is WTSA?

- WTSA is the **governing conference** for the standardization work of the International Telecommunication Union, organized **every four years.**

- It is for the first time that the ITU-WTSA is being hosted in India and the Asia-Pacific.

- It is a pivotal global event that has brought together more than 3,000 industry leaders, policy-makers and tech experts from over 190 countries, representing telecom, digital, and ICT sectors.

International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

- **It is the United Nations specialized agency** for Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

- **Founded in 1865** to facilitate international connectivity in communications networks.

  - **India** has been a member of **ITU since 1869.**

- **Functions:** It allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits.

  - It develops the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and strive to improve access to ICTs to underserved communities worldwide.

Significance

- These initiatives not only bolster **India's role as leader in the areas of telecommunication/ Information & Communication Technology (ICT)**, but also align seamlessly with the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision for a robust Digital Public Infrastructure, as articulated during India's G-20 Presidency.

- This emphasis on creating a global framework for digital technology underscores the importance of these resolutions for global governance.

- These resolutions are also aligned with PM Modi's **four pillars of Digital India** - Low-priced devices, extensive reach of digital connectivity to every nook and corner of the country, easily accessible data and **goal of 'Digital First'.**

Key Highlights of the Event

- **Bharat 6G Alliance:** Key MoUs were signed with international stakeholders, a step towards the promise of India's contribution to **10% of global 6G patents.**

- **Academic Engagement:** The **15th ITU Kaleidoscope Conference** saw record paper submissions, reflecting global interest in the future of digital infrastructure.

- **Championing Gender Balance:** The event celebrated unprecedented female participation, advancing gender equity in telecommunications with the highest female participation of **26% for the WTSAs** held outside Geneva (in Geneva 2022, it was 32%)

Kaleidoscope 2024 Conference

- The **15th** Kaleidoscope Academic Conference stands out as a key platform for **fostering innovation and collaboration in digital transformation** and telecommunications.

- **It is organized by ITU,** and brings together the brightest minds in academia, industry, and government to discuss cutting-edge developments in 5G, AI, IoT, quantum communications, and other transformative technologies.

- **Themed:** Innovation and Digital Transformation for a Sustainable World.

Resolutions adopted at ITU-WTSA 2024

- **Key proposals by India;**

  - A new Resolution on Enhancing the standardization activities on **Digital Public Infrastructure,**

  - A new Resolution on **Standardization activities of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector on AI technologies** in support of telecommunications/ Information & Communication Technology (ICT).

- **Other new ITU-T Resolutions include;**

  - Enhancing the standardization activities on **sustainable digital transformation,**

  - Promoting and strengthening **metaverse standardization,**

  - Promoting and Strengthening **Standardization Activities for Vehicular Communications.**

Source: PIB

BENEFIT SHARING FOR THE USE OF DIGITAL SEQUENCE INFORMATION (DSI)

In Context

- In the **16th Conference of Parties (COP16)** to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), discussions were held on topics like the multilateral system of benefit-sharing for the **use of digital sequence information (DSI) of genetic resources.**

About

- **Digital sequence information (DSI)** on genetic resources has become essential in biodiversity conservation and scientific research.

- DSI refers to the **digitalized genetic data of organisms**, which is frequently used for research in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and biodiversity. However, with the growing reliance on DSI, questions around fair benefit-sharing, especially for local communities whose regions harbor valuable biodiversity, have gained prominence.

What is Digital sequence information (DSI)?

- DSI encompasses the **digital representation of genetic sequences** that come from organisms' DNA, RNA, or proteins. It allows researchers to study biodiversity and ecosystems digitally, analyze genetic makeup without needing physical samples, and expedite advancements in fields like genetics and biotechnology.

- Like DSI data can help understand pathogen structures, develop medicines, and aid conservation efforts.

Benefits

- **Accelerated Research:** DSI enables rapid research by providing accessible genetic information for scientists and institutions worldwide.

- **Conservation and Biodiversity Studies:** DSI plays a key role in understanding and conserving biodiversity, especially for critically endangered species and supporting the prevention of species extinction.

- **Pharmaceuticals and Agriculture:** The digital nature of DSI enables research on plant genetics and potential medicines, benefitting industries that rely on genetic resources.

- **Data Sharing and Collaboration:** DSI databases, often publicly accessible, foster international collaboration, allowing for efficient knowledge sharing and contributing to global research initiatives.

Challenges of DSI

- **Lack of Benefit-Sharing Framework:** Developing nations argue that open access to DSI allows developed nations to utilize genetic data for profit without providing fair compensation to the original resource-holding countries or local communities.

- **Intellectual Property Issues:** DSI can lead to patenting by companies or nations on products developed from genetic data, raising questions about intellectual property and the rights of source nations or communities.

- **Conservation vs. Commercialization:** DSI could either contribute to conservation or lead to the exploitation of biodiversity, depending on how the information is used and whether benefits are equitably shared.

Related Initiatives

- **Nagoya Protocol:** Part of the Convention on Biological Diversity, this protocol emphasizes fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources, although it does not fully address DSI.

- **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF):** This framework, which includes DSI in target 13, aims to create a balanced approach to biodiversity conservation and benefit-sharing. It highlights the need for multilateral cooperation in managing DSI.

- **Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) Mechanisms:** Various ABS frameworks attempt to govern the use of genetic resources, including DSI. However, standardized international regulations for DSI remain a work in progress.

Source: DTE

EMISSIONS GAP REPORT 2024

Context

- **The Emissions Gap Report,** an annual publication of the UN Environment Programme, has been released.

About

- It is UNEP's spotlight report launched **annually in advance of the annual Climate negotiations.**

- It **tracks the gap** between where global emissions are heading with current country commitments and where they ought to be to limit warming to 1.5°C.

- Each edition **explores ways to bridge the emissions gap.**

- The report assessed countries' **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs),** which they are **required to update every five years,** to determine how much the world might warm if these plans were fully implemented.

About The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)

- It is the **leading environmental authority** in the United Nations system established in **1972.**

- **The UN Environment Assembly** is the policy-making organ of UNEP.

- **Headquarter:** Nairobi, Kenya.

- **Major Reports:** Global Environment Outlook, The Rise of Environmental Crime Report, Actions on Air Quality, Frontiers Report, Adaptation Gap Report.

Major Findings

- **1.5 Degree Target:** It warned that the Paris Agreement objective of keeping global rise in temperatures to within 1.5 degree Celsius would be gone within a few years.
    - The bare minimum required to keep the 1.5 degree target in sight was **42 percent reduction**. The reductions must **increase to 57 percent by 2035** to keep the target alive.
- **Global emissions in 2023** was 1.3 percent higher than the previous year.
    - **Greenhouse gas emissions of China and India**, two of the top three emitters, grew by 5.2 percent and 6.1 percent respectively.
- **Future Predictions: Current climate actions,** even in the most optimistic scenario, could reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by only **10 percent by 2030 on 2019 levels.**
    - **The 2 degree Celsius threshold** would be in danger of being breached, unless countries dramatically scale up their climate actions to reduce global emissions in two years.
    - Without dramatic cuts to greenhouse gas emissions, the world could face an inevitable **3.1°C temperature rise**.
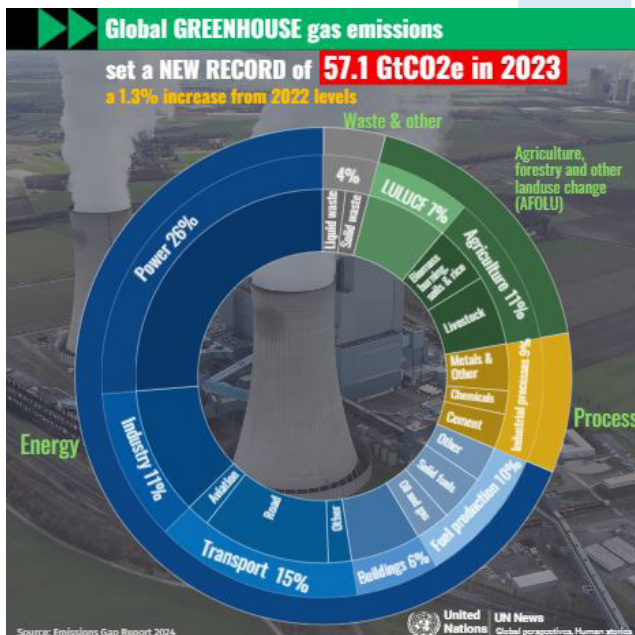
- **Recommendations:**
    - There is a need for a massive increase in investment in emissions reductions.
    - Boosting **solar photovoltaic and wind energy** usage could contribute 27 percent of the total reduction in 2030 and 38 percent by 2035.
    - Additionally, forest conservation could provide around 20 percent of the necessary reductions in both years.

- Other effective strategies include enhancing energy efficiency, electrifying various sectors and transitioning from fossil fuels in buildings, transport and industry.

India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) Goals

- India seeks to achieve following targets by 2030:
    - **Emission Reduction:** India aims to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by **45% by 2030**, compared to 2005 levels.
    - **Renewable Energy:** The country seeks to achieve **50%** of its energy needs from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, with a target of installing 500 GW of renewable energy capacity.
    - **Carbon Sink:** India plans to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO_2 equivalent through afforestation and reforestation efforts.

Source: IE

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN SPACE

In News

- The Union Cabinet has approved a 1,000 crore venture capital fund to support firms in the space technology sector.

Historical Developments

- India's space programme has evolved over more than five decades, focusing on application-driven initiatives to serve the common man.
- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** is advancing with missions to the moon and sun, and plans for space telescopes and manned missions.
- ISRO has partnered with **both public and private firm**s like HAL, Antrix, and Godrej Aerospace to manufacture space components.
    - **Antrix Corporation (1992)** was created to commercialize ISRO's products internationally.
- ISRO's growth is complemented by a **burgeoning private space sector.**
- ISRO is now one of the six largest space agencies globally, operating a significant fleet of GEO communication and LEO remote sensing satellites.

Private Sector Involvement

- The past few years have been significant for the growth of India's private space sector.

- Over 200 start-ups have emerged since the early 2010s, focusing on satellite design, manufacturing, and launch services.
- **Key start-ups include:** Dhruva Space: Custom satellite design and ground stations.
    - Skyroot Aerospace: Private launch vehicles and successful launches.
        - Skyroot Aerospace launched the first Indian private rocket, Vikram-S, in 2022.
    - Agnikul Cosmos: Innovative mobile launchpad and propulsion systems.
        - Agnikul Cosmos launched the world's first rocket with a fully 3D-printed engine from its private launch pad in 2024.
    - Manastu Space: Green technology for propulsion and satellite services.

Regulatory Framework:

- **IN-SPACe:** IN-SPACe is an autonomous agency under the Department of Space, established in 2020 to facilitate private sector participation in space activities.
    - IN-SPACe has signed around 45 MoUs with NGEs and has implemented various supportive schemes like the Seed Fund Scheme and Technology Transfer initiatives.
- **Anusandhan National Research Foundation:**This foundation aims to enhance public-private partnerships in scientific research, with a projected budget of 50,000 crore over five years, largely sourced from non-government funding.
- **National Geospatial Policy (2021):** Facilitates private access to geospatial data.
- **Indian Space Policy (2023)**: Allows private companies to operate satellites and launch vehicles, enhancing market participation.
- **FDI Policy:** The Indian government allows 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in the space sector, attracting overseas funding.
    - Amendments:Centre amended its FDI policy, allowing up to **74% FDI for satellite manufacturing and operation**, up to 49% FDI for launch vehicles, spaceports and associated systems and 100% FDI to manufacture components and systems/sub-systems for satellites, ground and user segments.
        - Beyond the above mentioned limits investment is allowed in these segments via the government route.
- **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL):**Established in 2019 to enhance indigenous production and support domestic customers.

Recent Developments

- IN-SPACe has proposed a Rs.1000 crore Venture Capital Fund to support the growth of India's space economy, currently valued at 8.4 billion dollars , with a target to reach $44 billion by 2033.
- The fund will be deployed over five years, starting with ₹150 crore in the 2025-26 financial year, followed by ₹250 crore annually for the next three years, and ₹100 crore in 2029-30.
- It will serve as an Alternative investment Fund under SEBI regulations, providing early-stage equity to startups and enabling them to scale for further private equity investments.
- The proposed fund is expected to boost employment in the Indian space sector by supporting startups across the entire space supply chain—upstream, midstream, and downstream.
- It will help businesses scale, invest in R&D, and expand their workforce.

Future Prospects:

- Despite private sector growth, ISRO remains the key player, launching numerous foreign satellites and leading various significant missions.
- The goal is to grow India's space economy from $8 billion to $100 billion by 2040, with continued leadership from ISRO and collaboration with private start-ups.
- The sector's future success depends on robust policy implementation, supportive ecosystems, and seamless collaboration between the government, ISRO, and private entities to realize India's space ambitions both domestically and globally.

Source: TH

═══ NEWS IN SHORT ═══

DISCOVERY OF TWO NEW CITIES IN UZBEKISTAN ON THE SILK ROUTE

Context

- Archaeologists have found the remains of two medieval cities, **Tugunbulak and Tashbulak,** in the mountains of eastern Uzbekistan on the Silk Route.

About

- Traditionally, the Silk Route was associated with plains and river valleys, believed to be the most accessible paths for trade.

- However, these new cities in elevated parts of Uzbekistan suggest that traders also traversed more mountainous regions.

What is the Silk Route?

- The Silk Route, also known as the Silk Road, was an ancient network of trade routes that connected the **East (mainly China) to the West (Europe and the Mediterranean).**
- Spanning over **6,000 kilometers**, the route facilitated the **trade of goods, especially silk,** along with spices, precious metals, ceramics, and other valuable items.
- It played a crucial role in the cultural, economic, and political exchange between civilizations over centuries.

Source: BBC

200 YEARS OF KITTUR VIJAYOTSAVA

In News

- A commemorative postage stamp was released to celebrate the **200th anniversary of Kittur Vijayotsava,** marking **Rani Channamm**a's victory against British rule in 1824.

About Rani Channamma

- She is celebrated as a freedom fighter and she symbolizes the independence movement in India.

- **Early Life :** Born on October 23, 1778, in Kakati, Karnataka, she was trained in martial skills from a young age.
    - Married to Mallasarja Desai, king of Kittur, she became queen and had one son, who died in 1824.
- **Kittur Conflict with British:** After her son's death, she adopted Shivalingappa as her heir, but the British denied the adoption, leading to conflict.
    - She led an armed rebellion against the **British East India Company in 1824**, opposing the **Doctrine of Lapse.**
        - She led the battle, where British forces faced heavy losses.
    - In a subsequent battle, Chennamma was outnumbered and ultimately captured by the British, leading to her imprisonment at Bailhongal Fort.
- **Death :** Rani Chennamma died in imprisonment on February 21, 1829.
    - Her burial site is maintained and honored during Kittur Utsava and Kannada Rajyotsava.
- **Legacy:** Her resistance inspired plays, folk songs, and stories, becoming a symbol of bravery in the Indian freedom movement.
    - Statues of Rani Chennamma were unveiled in various locations, including the Indian Parliament, and a train named after her connects Bangalore and Kolhapur.
    - A film titled **"Kitturu Chennamma"** was produced, depicting her life and struggles.
    - Since 1824, 'Kittur Utsava' has been celebrated every October to honor her heroic rebellion.

Source :Plb

JUSTICE SANJIV KHANNA APPOINTED NEXT CJI

Context

- President Droupadi Murmu appointed Justice Sanjiv Khanna as the 51st Chief Justice of India.

Constitutional Provisions

- The Constitution of India does not mention any procedure for appointing the CJI.
    - **Article 124 (1)** of the Constitution merely says, "There shall be a Supreme Court of India consisting of a Chief Justice of India."
- **Clause (2) of Article 124** of the Constitution says that every Judge of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President.
    - Thus, in the absence of a constitutional provision, the procedure to appoint CJI relies on convention.

What is the Convention?

- **The outgoing CJI recommends his successor a practice**, which is strictly based on seniority.
- Seniority, however, is not defined by age, but by the number of years a judge has been serving in the top court of the country.

Eligibility

- Apart from being an Indian citizen, the person must;
  - Have been for at least **five years a Judge of a High Court** or of two or more such Courts in succession or,
  - Have been for **at least ten years an advocate of a High Court** or of two or more such Courts in succession, or
  - Be, in the opinion of the President, a **distinguished jurist.**

Removal of CJI

- A Judge of the Supreme Court shall not be removed from his office except by an order of the President passed after an address by each House of Parliament supported by a **majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members** of that House present and voting.
- With the address in the same session presented to the President for removal on one of the two grounds: **Proved misbehavior or incapacity.**

Source: TH

WEATHER FORECAST AT GRAM PANCHAYAT LEVEL

Context

- The government launched the Weather Forecast at the Gram Panchayat level in New Delhi.

About

- The initiative will provide Gram Panchayats with a **five-day weather forecast** and hourly updates, enabling rural communities to better plan agricultural activities and prepare for weather-related risks.
- It is developed in collaboration between the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)** and the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**, **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).**
- The initiative will deliver weather updates via **e-GramSwaraj**, the **Meri Panchayat app**, and **Gram Manchitra.**
  - **The eGramSwaraj platform** helps with project tracking and resource management, while the **Meri Panchayat app** promotes community engagement.

- **The Gram Manchitra platform** provides geospatial insights, aiding in spatial planning and development projects at the Panchayat level.

Source: AIR

WORLD POLIO DAY

Context

- Every year **October 24** is observed as World Polio Day, established by Rotary International**,** to commemorate the birth of Jonas Salk, who led the first team to develop the vaccine against the disease in the 1950s.

About: Poliomyelitis (polio)

- It is a highly infectious disease caused by a **virus** that invades the **nervous system** and can cause total paralysis in a matter of hours.
- **Transmission:** Through **person-to-person** spread mainly through the faecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (e.g. contaminated water or food) and multiplies in the intestine.
- **Vulnerability: Mainly children under 5 years** of age. However, anyone of any age who is unvaccinated can contract the disease.
- **Symptoms:** Fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness of the neck and pain in the limbs.
- **Prevention and cure:** There is **no cure** for polio, it can only be prevented. There are **two vaccines available**: oral polio vaccine and inactivated polio vaccine.

Do you know?

- India was certified **polio-free in March 2014** and continues to be so. In January 2011, India reported its last polio case, in West Bengal's Howrah.
- According to the World Health Organisation, **Pakistan and Afghanistan** are the only countries in the world where polio remains endemic.

Source: IE

INDIA'S EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION: UNESCO REPORT

In News

- According to a UNESCO report, India's expenditure on education surpasses that of countries like China and Japan.

Status and Findings

- India allocated approximately **4.1% to 4.6% of its GDP for education**, aligning with the UN

Education 2030 Framework for Action, which recommends a range of 4% to 6%.

- India's government expenditure on education fluctuated between 13.5% and 17.2% of total public expenditure, meeting the Education 2030 target of 15-20%.

- The **global average** of public expenditure on education declined from 13.2% in 2010 to 12.5% in 2020, with further decreases noted post-COVID-19.

- **Comparison:** Reports from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics highlight that India's investment is stable compared to a global decline in average education investment.

  - India invests more in education than many neighboring countries in Central and Southern Asia, which typically allocate around 4-6% of GDP.
    - Countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan are falling behind in education expenditure.
  - Among Central and Southern Asian countries, India's education expenditure is only lower than Bhutan (7.5%), Kazakhstan (7.2%), Maldives (4.7%), Tajikistan (5.7%), and Uzbekistan (5.2%).

Source :Air

MHA ISSUES ADVISORY TO CREATE 'SPECIAL WING OF CYBER COMMANDOS'

Context

- Amid growing cyber threats, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued an advisory to all states regarding the establishment of a **Special Wing of Cyber Commandos.**

About

- The formation of this Special Wing was **recommended** by the Prime Minister during the **DGPs and IGPs Conference** held in January 2023 and 2024.

- The **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**, overseeing this initiative, aims to deploy 5,000 Cyber Commandos in the next five years.

- These commandos will **support state and central police organizations**, focusing exclusively on cyber security tasks like digital forensics, incident response, and ICT infrastructure security. These Cyber Commandos will work within their respective police organizations.

- Currently, the **first batch** of 246 Cyber Commandos is undergoing six months of rigorous hands-on training at several prestigious institutions, including IIT Madras, IIT Kanpur, and the National Forensic Science University (NFSU) in Gandhinagar.

Need & Significance

- Recently, there is a rise in cybercrimes targeting crucial establishments and airlines which causes significant disruption, security threat and financial loss.

  - The majority of these threats were created using **virtual private networks (VPNs)** or **dark web browsers**, eluding detection by investigative agencies.

- The cases of the digital arrest scam also rises, where cybercriminals "digitally detained" the persons and coerced them to pay money.

Source: DDNews

SIMBEX 2024

Context

- The 31st edition of the Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) began in the Eastern Naval Command at Visakhapatnam.

About

- SIMBEX, which began as **'Exercise Lion King'** in 1994, holds the distinction of being the **longest continuous naval exercise** that the Indian Navy has with any other country.

- SIMBEX 2024 will be conducted in **two phases** - the Harbour Phase at Visakhapatnam and the Sea Phase in the Bay of Bengal.

- This year's edition aims to further strengthen the strategic partnership between India and Singapore by enhancing interoperability, improving maritime domain awareness, and fostering cooperation to address common maritime challenges.

Do you know?

- The Singapore Army and Indian Army conduct bilateral exercises **Bold Kurukshetra** and **Agni Warrior**.

Source: PIB

WATER HYACINTH

In News

- The Andhra Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation is planning to impart training to artisans in manufacturing eco-friendly products and decorative material with water hyacinth.

About Water Hyacinth

• Water Hyacinth is called Gurrapudekka in Telugu, it is is a **non-native aquatic invasive plant.**

• It has a fibrous stem and is used in **making various handicraft items**, including handbags, table mats, baskets, and decorative pieces.

• It **absorbs heavy metals and pollutants**, making it useful in wastewater treatment, though its disposal after use requires careful management.

• Water hyacinth can **block sunlight and deplete oxygen in water bodies**, harming fish and other aquatic life.

Source: THv

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