

My Notes....

NATIONAL

NITI AAYOG, UNDP JOIN HANDS TO FAST-TRACK SDGS

- **NITI Aayog** and the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** signed a **memorandum of understanding** to formalise a **cooperative framework** to fast-track India's pursuit to achieve its **sustainable development goals (SDGs)**
- **NITI Aayog** is the **nodal body** for the **monitoring of SDGs in India** and reviews the process through a **nationwide SDG index**.
- The memorandum of understanding between the think tank and **UNDP** was signed for a **period of years**.

REVAMPED 'ADOPT A HERITAGE 2.0' PROGRAMME

- The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** launched a **revamped version** of the **'Adopt a Heritage' programme** apart from an **Indian Heritage app** and an **e-permission portal**.
- **Initially launched in 2017** under the **Ministry of Tourism**, in collaboration with **the ASI** which invited corporate stakeholders to adopt from **over 3,000 protected monuments** spread across the country, **'Adopt a Heritage 2.0'**, is the **upgraded version** of **'Adopt a Heritage' programme**.

GOVT FORMS COMMITTEE ON SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

- The government has **constituted a committee** headed by former president of India **Ram Nath Kovind** to explore the possibility of **"one nation, one election"**.

INDORE RANKS FIRST IN CLEAN AIR SURVEY 2023

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change **Bhupender Yadav** awarded **first rank** to the **Information Technology hub of Madhya Pradesh, Indore**, in the **Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan-2023** (or Clean Air Survey), conducted by the **Central Pollution Control Board**.
- The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** has been implementing the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** as a **national-level strategy**, outlining the actions for **reducing the levels of air pollution** at city and regional scales in India since 2019.

CABINET APPROVES ECOURTS PROJECT PHASE-III

- The Union Cabinet approved the **third phase of eCourts Project** as a **central sector scheme** to be implemented **over four years**.
- As part of the **National eGovernance Plan**, the **eCourts Project** is under **implementation since 2007** for **ICT enablement of the Indian Judiciary**. The Phase II of the project has **concluded in 2023**.
- **Phase III of the e-Courts Project**, beginning 2023, in India is rooted in the philosophy of **"access and inclusion"**.

INTERNATIONAL

INDIA, ASEAN AGREE TO DEEPEN STRATEGIC TIES

- **India** and **10-nation ASEAN** agreed to deepen their **comprehensive strategic partnership** with **concrete actions** through practical implementation of the **'Plan of Action'** to implement the **ASEAN-India partnership for peace, progress and shared prosperity**.
- **ASEAN** was formed on **8 August 1967**; five leaders – the Foreign Ministers of **Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand** – came together **in Bangkok**.

INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE MEGA ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** announced the launch of the **India-Middle East-Europe mega economic corridor**.

1-15 September 2023

- The project includes **India**, the **UAE**, **Saudi Arabia**, the **European Union**, **France**, **Italy**, **Germany** and the **US**.
- The **rail and shipping corridor** is part of the **Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII)** — a collaborative effort by **G7 nations** to fund infrastructure projects in **developing nations**.
- PGII is considered to be the **bloc's** counter to **China's Belt and Road Initiative**.

A NEW MEMBER IN G20

- The **African Union (AU)** was **admitted as a new member of the G20**. The development took place at the **ongoing 18th G20 Heads of State and Government Summit in New Delhi**.
- The **AU** is an **intergovernmental organisation** of the **55 member** states located on the **continent of Africa**.

GLOBAL BIOFUEL ALLIANCE LAUNCHED

- **India** announced the launch of the **Global Biofuel Alliance** and urged G20 nations to join the initiative with a plea to **take ethanol blending with petrol globally to 20 per cent**.
- The **Global Biofuels Alliance** is aimed at facilitating cooperation and intensifying the use of **sustainable biofuels** across sectors, including transportation.

G20 DECLARATION ON HEALTH

- **All three health priorities** of **India's G20 presidency** found a mention in the **G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration** released.
- The declaration spoke of **strengthening primary healthcare**, **health workforce**, and **essential health services** to better-than-pre-pandemic levels, ideally within the **next two to three years**.

ECONOMY

UPI QR CODE-CBDC INTEROPERABILITY

- With banks enabling the **interoperability of Unified Payments Interface's (UPI) Quick Response (QR) code** with their **central bank digital currency (CBDC)** or **e₹** application, users of retail **digital rupee** will be able to make transactions by scanning **any UPI QR** at a merchant outlet.
- **Interoperability** is the **technical compatibility** that **enables a payment system** to be **used in conjunction with other payment systems**, according to the RBI.

INDIA CAN NOW ISSUE OIML CERTIFICATES

- **India** has become the **13th internationally accepted authority** for issuing **International Organisation of Legal Metrology (OIML) certificates**.
- The **OIML** established in **1955** and **headquartered in Paris**, the OIML is an **international standard-setting body**.
- It develops **model regulations**, **standards** and **related documents** for use by legal metrology authorities and industry.

SELF REGULATORY ORGANISATION FOR FINTECHS

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor **Shaktikanta Das** has asked **fintech entities** to form a **Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO)**.
- An **SRO** is a **non-governmental organisation** that sets and **enforces rules and standards** relating to the conduct of entities in the industry (members) with the aim of protecting the customer and promoting **ethics**, **equality**, and **professionalism**. SROs typically collaborate with **all stakeholders** in framing rules and regulations.

RBI TO DISCONTINUE I-CRR

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** announced that it would **discontinue the incremental cash reserve ratio (I-CRR)** in a **phased manner**.
- **I-CRR** was **introduced on 10 August 2023**, by the RBI to **absorb the surplus liquidity** generated by various factors, including the **return of Rs 2,000 notes** to the banking system.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INDIA'S FIRST SUN OBSERVATORY LAUNCHED

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** launched **Aditya L-1**, its **first space-based mission to study the Sun**, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- The mission's **main objective is to expand our knowledge of the Sun**, and **how its radiation, heat, flow of particles, and magnetic fields affect us**.

CHANDRAYAAN-3 CONFIRMS SULPHUR IN LUNAR SURFACE

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** said the **Pragyan** rover's **Laser-Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy** confirmed the **presence of sulphur** in the **lunar surface near the south pole**, through the first-ever **in-situ measurements**.
- **Pragyan is a lunar rover** that forms part of **Chandrayaan-3**, the lunar mission developed by ISRO.
- The **Laser-Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (LIBS) instrument** onboard **Chandrayaan-3 Rover** has made the **first-ever in-situ measurements** on the **elemental composition** of the lunar surface near the **South Pole**.

LARGEST INDIGENOUSLY DEVELOPED N-PLANT STARTS OPS

- The **third unit** of the **indigenously developed 700-megawatt electric (MWe) nuclear power reactor** at the **Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP3)** in Gujarat has commenced operations at full capacity.
- This comes a little over three years since the unit achieved its '**first criticality**' – a technical term that signifies **the initiation of a controlled, but sustained nuclear fission reaction** – in July 2020.

NAVY'S STEALTH FRIGATE MAHENDRAGIRI LAUNCHED

- The **seventh stealth frigate**, under the **Indian Navy's Project 17 A, Mahendragiri**, was launched.
- **Built at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL)**, the vessel was developed as part of the push towards the **Aatmnirbhar Bharat idea**.
- **Mahendragiri**, named after a **mountain peak in Eastern Ghats** located in the state of Odisha, is the seventh ship of the **Project 17A Frigates**.

GENOME SECRETS OF INDIAN OIL SARDINE

- In a major breakthrough in **marine fisheries research**, a team of scientists at the **ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)** has decoded the **whole genome** of the **Indian oil sardine**, a popular food fish.
- This is the **first time** that the **genome of a marine fish species** from the **Indian subcontinent** has been decoded.
- **Sardines** are an **ecologically important** part of the marine ecosystem, as they form an **intermediate link in the food web** and serve as prey for larger predators.

COURT ALLOWS STEM CELL THERAPY FOR AUTISTIC KIDS

- The **Delhi High Court** permitted two children with **autism spectrum disorder (ASD)** to **undergo stem cell therapy** for treatment of their condition.
- **Stem cells are cells** from which **all other cells**, with **their respective specialised functions**, are generated.

SCIENTISTS GREW WHOLE MODEL OF HUMAN EMBRYO

- Scientists have successfully grown a "**human embryo**" in the **lab without using an egg or sperm**.
- They used a **mix of stem cells** — early cells that have the ability to differentiate into other types of cells — that was able to **spontaneously assemble into an embryo-like structure**, mimicking molecular characteristics of an early embryo.

JAXA SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH LANDER SLIM ON MOON

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** congratulated **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)** for the successful launch of the **Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM)**.
- This mission was conducted in **collaboration with NASA**, and it will involve **studying light at various wavelengths, temperature assessments, and analysing the shapes and brightness of celestial objects.**

MISCELLANEOUS

HINDI DIWAS 2023

- **Hindi Diwas** Celebrated on 14 September every year, **Hindi Diwas** aims to **raise awareness about the language** and also **commemorate the event** when it was adopted as one of the **official languages of India.**
- On **14 September 1949** the Constituent Assembly of India **adopted Hindi as the official language** of the newly independent nation.

'NATIONAL DISASTER' TAG AFTER HEAVY RAINS

- Himachal Pradesh has requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to declare the destruction caused by heavy rains in the state a **national disaster.**
- There is **no official or defined category** of "**national disasters**". Disasters of this nature come under the **2005 Disaster Management Act**, which defines a "**disaster**" as "**a catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence** in any area, arising from **natural or manmade causes.**

SHANTI SWARUP BHATNAGAR PRIZE

- An **Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras)** professor **Rajnish Kumar** has received the **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize.**
- The **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize** for Science and Technology (SSB) is a **science award in India** presented annually by the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** for **notable and outstanding research, applied or fundamental, in biology, chemistry, environmental science, engineering, mathematics, medicine and physics.**
- **Started in the year 1985**, the award is named after the **founder director of CSIR Dr Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar.**

WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED ARABIC LARGE LANGUAGE MODEL

- A **unit of Abu Dhabi AI company G42**, has released '**Jais**', the world's most advanced **Arabic large language model.** **Jais** is a **bilingual Arabic-English model** that has been trained on a **massive dataset of text and code.**
- It can be used for a variety of tasks, such as **machine translation, text summarization, and question answering.**

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ROBOTICS

- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** has invited public comments as well as inputs from stakeholders on the draft "**National Strategy for Robotics (NSR).**
- The strategy is aimed at "**strengthening all pillars in the innovation cycle of robotic technology**, while also providing a **robust institutional framework** for ensuring the **effective implementation** of these interventions.