



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JULY, 2024

Week-3

15-21 July, 2024

★★ Useful for ★★

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

15th JULY 2024

Puri Jagannath Temple Ratna Bhandar

- **Context:** Recently, the Ratna Bhandar, the sacred treasury of 12th-century Shree Jagannath Temple, Puri was opened after 46 years after years of legal battles, controversies and debates.

About Ratna Bhandar

- **It comprises two chambers:** the Bhitari Bhandar (Inner Treasury) and the Bahar Bhandar (Outer Treasury). These chambers safeguard a collection of rare and precious items donated over centuries by devotees and kings to Lord Jagannath.

About Jagannath Puri Temple

- Jagannath Puri Temple was built in the 12th Century AD by King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty.
- It is one of the four Dhams (Holiest of the holy place) along with Dwarika, Badrinath and Rameshwaram. It was also called the 'White Pagoda'.
- According to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death, has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath, popularly known as Lord Krishna.

Money Bill

- **Context:** The Supreme Court of India agreed to list petitions challenging the Money Bill route taken by the Centre to pass contentious amendments in the Parliament.

Key highlights

- The Money Bill case was referred to the supreme court in 2019 in the case of Rojer Mathew vs. South Indian Bank Ltd.
- The issue is whether such amendments could be passed as a Money Bill, circumventing the Rajya Sabha, in violation of Article 110 of the Constitution.

About Money Bill

- Article 110 of the Constitution deals with the definition of money bills.
- A Money Bill can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha, only by a minister, and only on the recommendation of the President.
- If any question arises whether a bill is a Money bill or not, the decision of the Speaker of Lok Sabha is final.
- After a Money bill is passed by the Lok Sabha, it is transmitted to the Rajya Sabha.
- Rajya Sabha cannot reject or amend a Money bill. Rajya Sabha can only make recommendations. Rajya Sabha must return the bill within 14 days, with or without recommendations.
- The Lok Sabha can either accept or reject all or any of the recommendations of Rajya Sabha.
- If the Rajya Sabha does not return the bill within 14 days, the bill is deemed to have been passed by both the Houses in the form originally passed by Lok Sabha.

World Youth Skills Day 2024

- **Context:** The World Youth Skills Day is observed on July 15 annually.

Key Facts

- The initiative was designated by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2014, emphasizes the significance of equipping youth with necessary skills to tackle unemployment and underemployment.
- This year's World Youth Skills Day theme, "Youth Skills for Peace and Development," highlights the role of youth in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.
- The day also marks the 5th anniversary of the launch of Skill India Mission.

About Skill India Mission

- It has been launched to empower the youth of the country with skill sets which make them more employable and more productive in their work environment.

- Skill India offers courses across several sectors which are aligned to the standards recognised by both, the industry and the government under the National Skill Qualification Framework.
- The courses help a person focus on practical delivery of work and help him enhance his technical expertise so that companies don't have to invest into training him for his job profile.

16th JULY 2024

Central Information Commission

- **Context:** The Supreme Court ruled that the Central Information Commission has powers to constitute benches and frame regulations, for its effective functioning.

Key Fact

- The Chief Information Commissioner's powers to frame regulations pertaining to the constitution of benches of the commission are upheld as such powers are within the ambit of Section 12(4) of the RTI Act.

About Central Information Commission

- The Central Information Commission (CIC) is a statutory body in India, established under the provisions of the Right to Information Act (2005).
- The Central Information Commission consists of a Chief Information Commissioner and not more than ten Information Commissioners.
- The members are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of:
 - The Prime Minister as the Chairperson,
 - The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and
 - A Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.
- The Chief Information Commissioner, or Information Commissioners, as the case may be, shall hold office for a period of three years from the date on which he enters upon his office.

Indian Newspaper Society (INS)

- **Context:** The Prime Minister inaugurated the INS Towers on his visit to the Indian Newspaper Society (INS) Secretariat.

Key Facts

- The early beginnings of the Society can be traced back to October 11, 1927, with the name of The India, Burma & Ceylon Newspapers' London Committee.
- It was changed to Indian & Eastern Newspaper Society (IENS) in 1935.
- This was an organization based in London representing and acting solely under the authority of newspapers, magazines, reviews and other journals published in India, Burma, Ceylon and other countries of Asia.

Functions:

- To act as a central organization of the Press of India and of any other country in Asia, which desires to associate itself with the Society.
- To promote and safeguard the business interests of its members.
- It plays a major role in protecting and promoting freedom of the press in India.
- To collect information upon all topics having a practical business interest for its members and to communicate the same to them.

17th JULY 2024

Report of India's G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure

- **Context:** Recently, the final 'Report of India's G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure' was released highlighting that India should identify a body to promote Digital Public Infrastructure in the Global South.

G20's Recognition

- Earlier, the Prime Minister of India announced a \$25-million investment to develop DPI, emphasising its importance in inclusive growth.

- On the other hand, the G20 established the Digital Public Infrastructure Repository, featuring over 50 DPIs from 16 countries, aiming to facilitate knowledge sharing and adoption of DPIs globally, especially in the Global South.
- At the G20 Summit, India showcased its digital capabilities, including Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, and other DPI-related initiatives.
- These systems empower citizens, enhance financial inclusion, and drive economic transformation.

About the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

- It refers to the foundational digital systems and services that enable seamless connectivity, data exchange, and digital transactions across various sectors.
- It encompasses both hardware (such as networks, servers, and devices) and software (such as platforms, protocols, and applications).
- It acts as the digital backbone that supports everything from online payments and identity verification to e-governance and healthcare services.

Recommendations from India's G20 Task Force

- The final report by India's G20 Task Force on DPI highlights the need for India to take on added responsibility in promoting DPI globally.
- India should identify an existing body (preferably with global reach) to harness the DPI ecosystem. This body would work on policy formulation, strategy implementation, and technical expertise.
- Integrating artificial intelligence (AI) with DPIs can amplify their capabilities, but ethical use and data privacy must be maintained.

Article 341

- **Context:** Recently, the Supreme Court of India ruled that the states cannot make changes to the Scheduled Caste List published under Article 341 of the Constitution.

About Article 341

- It is a crucial provision that deals with the identification and recognition of Scheduled Castes (SCs), which are historically marginalised communities that have faced social discrimination and exclusion.
- Article 341 empowers the President of India to specify which castes, races, or tribes should be considered as SCs.
- Once the President issues such a notification (Presidential Order), these communities are entitled to certain protective measures and affirmative action.
- It's important to note that once this list is published, any subsequent changes whether additions, deletions, or modifications can only be made through legislation enacted by the Parliament.

18th JULY 2024

NITI Aayog

- **Context:** The government has reconstituted the NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog, increasing the number of special invitees from five to 11.

Key highlights

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains the Chairperson and economist Suman K Bery will continue to be the Vice Chairperson of NITI Aayog.
- While the top positions remain unchanged, several new ministers in the newly formed government have been appointed as either ex-officio members or special invitees to the Aayog.

About NITI Aayog

- The institution was formed in the year 2015 through a resolution of the Union cabinet. The institution replaced the planning commission which was instituted in 1950.

- The Governing Council comprises the Prime Minister; Chief Ministers of all the States and Union Territories with legislature; Lt Governors of other UTs; Ex-Officio Members; Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog; Full-Time Members, NITI Aayog; and Special Invitees.
- It is a policy think tank of the Indian government which provides inputs regarding the different programmes and policies of the government.
- It gives relevant advice to the centre and state governments as well as to the Union territories.
- It plays an important role in designing the strategies for the long-term policies and programmes put forth by the government of India.

Cold Fusion Technology

- **Context:** Hyderabad-based start-up HYLENR demonstrated how cold fusion technology can be used to generate Clean Energy.

Key Facts

- HYLENR's reactors utilize Low Energy Nuclear Reactors by applying milligrams of hydrogen and a small volume of electricity to stimulate and generate excess heat through fusion.
- The heat produced is used for space applications (MMRTG), steam generation for multiple applications, room heating across cold regions globally, and induction heating for domestic and industrial requirements.

About Nuclear Fusion

- It is a process in which two light atomic nuclei combine to form a heavier nucleus, releasing a significant amount of energy in the process. This process is the same as what powers stars, including our sun.
- The most common fusion reaction involves the isotopes of hydrogen: deuterium and tritium.
- When these isotopes fuse, they form helium and release a neutron, along with a large amount of energy.

19th JULY 2024

Mukhyamantri Yuva Karya Prashikshan Yojana

- **Context:** The Maharashtra government will spend Rs 5,500 crore on the Mukhyamantri Yuva Karya Prashikshan Yojana internship scheme for unemployed youth.

Key Facts

- For the 12th pass, a stipend of ₹6,000 is allotted, and for ITI/Diploma – ₹8,000 and degree/post-graduation – ₹10,000 will be offered.
- Both government establishments and private sector industries are eligible to participate, provided they meet specific criteria including registration with Employees Provident Fund (EPF), Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), GST, and Udyog Aadhar, and have been operational for a minimum of three years.

About Mukhyamantri Yuva Karya Prashikshan Yojana

- This scheme was announced in Budget 2024-25 in Maharashtra and aims to enhance the employability and skill set of the youth and prepare them for a competitive job market.
- It includes a six-month internship duration and a stipend structure designed to support interns based on their educational qualifications. Interns will receive monthly stipends through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

- **Context:** The Union Government plans to launch the fourth phase of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

Key highlights

- It will be launched to connect 50,000 habitations having population above 250 in plain areas and 100 in special category states with all-weather roads.
- **Phases of the scheme:**
 - The second phase of the scheme was launched in 2013.
 - After the two phases, another component of the PMGSY, Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas (RCPLWEA), was launched in 2016 for construction of rural roads in LWE areas.
 - The third phase was launched in 2019.

About Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

- It is a centrally Sponsored Scheme, launched in the year 2000.
- **Objective:** It aims to provide all-weather road connectivity to all eligible unconnected habitations in rural areas of the country.
- The Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal ministry for this scheme.

Nanhe Farishte

- **Context:** Railway Protection Force (RPF) have rescued over 84,119 children under the operation named 'Nanhe Farishte'. It is a mission dedicated to rescuing children in need of care and protection across various Indian Railway Zones.

About Railway Protection Force (RPF)

- It was constituted as a federal Force in the year 1957, RPF is responsible for the security of railway property, and passenger and passenger zones.
- RPF motto: "Yasho Labhasva"– "Attain Glory'."
- It has been implementing innovative solutions suited to the typical needs at the ground-zero level.
- RPF has the distinction of being the federal force of India with the largest share of women in its ranks.

20th JULY 2024

Finance Commission

- **Context:** The 16th Finance Commission headed by Arvind Panagariya has begun its work by inviting suggestions from the public on the mandate set for it by the Centre.

About Finance Commission

- The Finance Commission is a constitutional body constituted by the President of India under Article 280, that recommends how tax revenues collected by the Central government should be distributed among the Centre and various States in the country.
- The Commission is reconstituted every five years and usually takes a couple of years to make its recommendations to the Centre.
- The Centre is not legally bound to implement the suggestions made by the Finance Commission.

Key functions

- The Finance Commission decides what proportion of the Centre's net tax revenue goes to the States overall (vertical devolution) and how this share for the States is distributed among various States (horizontal devolution).
- The horizontal devolution of funds between States is usually decided based on a formula created by the Commission that takes into account a State's population, fertility level, income level, geography, etc.
- The vertical devolution of funds, however, is not based on any such objective formula.
- The Centre also aids States through additional grants for certain schemes that are jointly funded by the Centre and the States.

Project Strawberry

- **Context:** OpenAI is reportedly building a new AI model named Project 'Strawberry'.

Key highlights

- OpenAI is working on a new reasoning technology under the code name “Strawberry”, believed to be the new name for Project Q* (Q-Star). It was reportedly a plan for making AI capable of planning, logical reasoning, and capabilities similar to that of a human brain.
- Large Language Models (LLMs), which form the basis of AI chatbots, can summarise dense texts and compose prose instantly. However, they struggle with common sense problems and multi-step logic tasks.
- Strawberry models, with their enhanced reasoning, would perform tasks that require planning and a series of actions over an extended time.
- Strawberry models could undertake advanced research — conduct experiments, analyse data, and suggest new hypotheses. This could lead to multiple breakthroughs in sciences.

21th JULY 2024

Article 361

- **Context:** The Supreme Court agreed to examine the contours of Article 361 of the Constitution which grants “blanket immunity” to governors from any kind of criminal prosecution.

Background

- A woman staff member of the West Bengal Raj Bhawan, has accused Governor CV Ananda Bose of sexual harassment.
- The plea challenges the immunity granted to the governor of a state under Article 361 of the Indian Constitution and seeks several directions and investigations.

About Article 361

- The Governors of state receive immunity from legal proceedings over the duration of their term in office under Article 361 of the Constitution.

- The aim of the Article is to ensure that they are not answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of their official powers and duties, nor for any acts done in the course of these duties.
- No criminal cases can be initiated or continued against them, and no arrest or imprisonment orders can be issued by any court under Clause (2) of Article 361.
- The Article mandates a two-month notice for any civil proceedings related to personal acts.
- Clause (3) of Article 361 restricts any arrest or imprisonment orders during their term.
- The article is an exception to Article 14 (right to equality) of the Constitution and provides that the president or the governor is not answerable to any court for the exercise of the powers and duties of his office.

Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) Program

- **Context:** Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) program is set to get a fresh boost as the Paris Olympics draws near.

About KIRTI

- KIRTI (Khelo India Rising Talent Identification) aims to develop an integrated talent identification architecture based on modern ICT tools and global best practices. It seeks to streamline the process of grassroots talent identification on a single platform.
- The program is set to revolutionize the landscape of Indian sports by focusing on two primary objectives:
 - Identifying sports talent from across the nation,
 - Using sports to combat drug addiction and excessive gadget use among school children aged 9 to 18.
- The programme aligns with the nation’s aspiration to become a top 10 sports nation by 2036 and among the top five by 2047.

Manoj Soni

- **Context:** Recently, Manoj Soni, the chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), has resigned, citing 'personal reasons' for stepping down from his position.

About UPSC

- The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is the central recruiting agency in India. It is an independent constitutional body.
- The provisions regarding the composition of UPSC, appointment and removal of its members and the powers and functions of UPSC are provided in Part XIV of the Indian Constitution under Article 315 to Article 323.
- Appointment of Members: The Chairman and other members of the UPSC are appointed by the President of India.
- Term of Office: Any member of the UPSC shall hold office for a term of six years or till the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- Reappointment: Any person who has once held the office as a member of the UPSC is ineligible for reappointment to that office.
- Resignation: A member of the Union Public Service Commission may resign from his/her office by submitting the written resignation to the President of India.
- Removal/Suspension of Members: The Chairman or any other member of UPSC shall only be removed from his/her office by order of the President of India.

