MADE EASY

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

OCTOBER, 2024

Week-1

1-7 Oct., 2024

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

1st OCTOBER 2024

BharatGen

- **Context:** "BharatGen" world's first government-funded multimodal Large Language Model initiative launched by the Ministry of Science & Technology.

About BharatGen

- **Aim:** To revolutionize public service delivery and enhance citizen engagement by developing foundational models in language, speech, and computer vision.
- **Implementation:** By IIT Bombay under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS)
- **Key Features of BharatGen:**
  - Multilingual and multimodal foundation models.
  - Building and training based on India-centric datasets.
  - Open-source platform for fostering AI research and innovation.
- The project is expected to be completed by 2026, with ongoing research, development, and scaling of AI applications.

Jal Hi AMRIT Initiative

- **Context:** 'Jal hi Amrit' initiative is being launched under AMRUT 2.0 reforms.

About Jal Hi Amrit Initiative

- The initiative envisaged to incentivise State & UTs to manage the used water (sewage) treatment plants (UWTPs/ STPs) efficiently for ensuring recyclable good quality treated water, meeting environmental standards, on a sustained basis.
- The purpose of the exercise is to build the competition among the cities, develop capacities and incentivise them to attain the best quality of used treated water at the treatment facilities.

- Clean Water Credits will be awarded to Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) based on their performance in treating water. The credits are rated between 3 to 5 stars, with the rating valid for six months.
- STPs will be rated on their ability to produce high-quality treated water. The rating serves as an official recognition of their performance.

About AMRUT 2.0

- It was launched on 01 October, 2021 for the period of 05 years i.e. from the financial year 2021-22 to the financial year 2025-26.
- AMRUT 2.0 is designed to provide universal coverage of water supply through functional taps to all households in all the statutory towns in the country and coverage of sewage/septage management in 500 cities covered in the first phase of the AMRUT scheme.
  - AMRUT 1.0 (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) was launched in 2015 with the primary aim of ensuring that every household in selected cities and towns has access to basic civic amenities to improve their quality of life.

Bidkin Industrial Area (BIA)

- **Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the Bidkin Industrial Area in Maharashtra to the nation.

About Bidkin Industrial Area (BIA)

- The Bidkin Industrial Area spans 7,855 acres and is part of the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) under the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor.
- It is situated 20 km south of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, Maharashtra, with excellent connectivity via NH-752E, proximity to Aurangabad railway station (20 km), Aurangabad Airport (30 km), and Jalna Dry Port (65 km).
- Total project cost is Rs. 6,414 crore, developed in three phases.

- It will be equipped with wide roads, quality water and power supply, and advanced sewage and common effluent treatment plants, ready for industrial allotments.

2nd OCTOBER 2024

10 Years of Swachh Bharat Mission

- **Context:** Swachh Bharat Mission completed the 10 years of implementation on 2nd October 2024. This year's theme, 'Swabhav Swachhata, Sanskaar Swachhata,' emphasises the importance of cleanliness and environmental well-being.

About Swachh Bharat Mission

- The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) was launched in 2014 with the goal of achieving universal sanitation coverage by 2019, as a tribute to the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- It aims to make the country Open Defecation Free (ODF).
- It aims to build toilet infrastructure by offering financial incentives for building household toilets, as well as community toilets for slums and migrant populations.
- It consisted of two sub-missions, urban, and rural or Gramin (G).
- SBM(G) sought to improve "the levels of cleanliness through Solid and Liquid Waste Management activities and making Gram Panchayats Open Defecation Free (ODF), clean and sanitized.
  - 2019 marked the end of the first phase of SBM(G), the second phase, started in 2020-2021, expands efforts with a focus on safe management of solid and liquid waste and sustainability of ODF.
- **SBM (Urban) 2.0:** Commenced in 2021 and is expected to run till 2026.
  - **Targets:** Sustaining the achievements of phase 1 and ensuring that treatment of both liquid and solid waste is achieved through the help of technology and private sector engagement.

PM e-DRIVE Scheme

- **Context:** The government has launched the PM e-DRIVE Scheme, for faster adoption of electric vehicles

About PM e-DRIVE Scheme

- The scheme shall be implemented from October 1, 2024 to March 31, 2026.
- The EMPS-2024 (Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme) is being subsumed under the PM E-DRIVE scheme.
- The subsidy under the scheme for electric two-wheelers has been fixed based on battery power at Rs 5,000 per kilowatt hour but the overall incentive will not exceed Rs 10,000 in the first year.
- Ministry of Heavy Industries is introducing e-vouchers for EV buyers to avail demand incentives under the scheme.
  - One vehicle per Aadhaar will be allowed. As soon as the vehicle is sold, e-voucher will be generated.
  - The signed e-voucher will be essential for OEM (original equipment manufacturer) to claim reimbursement of demand incentives under the scheme.
- The scheme addresses range anxiety of EV buyers by promoting in a big way the installation of electric vehicle public charging stations (EVPCS). These EVPCS shall be installed in select cities with high EV penetration and also on selected highways.

3rd OCTOBER 2024

Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA)

- **Context:** The Prime Minister launched the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA).

About DAJGUA

- The scheme is launched for improving the socio-economic condition of tribal communities, by adopting saturation coverage for tribal families in tribal-majority villages and aspirational districts.

- The Abhiyan will cover around 63,843 villages benefitting more than 5 crore tribal people in all tribal majority villages and aspirational blocks in 30 States/UTs.
- It envisions saturation of critical gaps in social infrastructure, health, education, livelihood.
- The Mission comprises 25 interventions which will be implemented by 17-line ministries.
- Each Ministry/Department would be responsible for implementation of schemes related to it in a time bound manner through funds allocated to them under the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST) in the next 5 years.

India's Core Sectors

- **Context:** As per the data released by the Commerce Ministry, the index of eight core industries fell by 1.8% annually in August compared with a 6.1% gain in July.

Key Facts

- Only two of the eight sectors, fertilisers and steel, reported a sequential rise in production in August.
- The output of coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, cement and electricity all contracted.
- The ICI (index of eight core industries) gives an indication of the production performance of the industries which are of a 'core' nature and measures the individual and collective performances of the production in these eight core industries.

About Core Sector Industries

- These core industries are considered as main or key industries of the economy and serve as the backbone of all other industries.
- The eight-core sector industries include coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity.
- The eight core industries comprise 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

4th OCTOBER 2024

Classical Language Status

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet has granted classical language status to Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali, increasing recognized classical languages to eleven.

About Classical Languages

- India had six classical languages — Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia.
  - Tamil was declared a classical language in 2004, Sanskrit in 2005, Kannada in 2008, Telugu in 2008, Malayalam in 2013, and Odia in 2014.
  - All the Classical Languages are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.
- It should have high antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1,500-2,000 years, a body of ancient literature or texts that is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.
- **Benefits:** The Education Ministry provides certain benefits to promote it such as:
  - two major annual international awards for scholars of eminence in the said languages,
  - a Centre of Excellence for Studies in the classical language is set up,
  - and the University Grants Commission is requested to start with a certain number of Chairs for the classical language at least in the Central Universities.

Five-Year Cruise Bharat Mission

- **Context:** The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, launched the five-year Cruise Bharat Mission from Mumbai port.

Key Highlights

- The mission aims to excel India's vision to become a global hub for cruise tourism and promote the country as the leading global cruise destination.

- It includes increasing sea cruise passengers from 0.5 million in Phase 1 to 1 million and river cruise passengers from 0.5 million in Phase 1 to 1.5 million by Phase 3.
- It also includes developing 10 Sea Cruise Terminals, 100 River Cruise Terminals, and five Marinas under the mission.

Implementation Phases of Mission

- The implementation of the Mission is spread across three phases, running from 1 October 2024, to 31 March 2029:
  - **Phase 1:** Focuses on research activities, master planning, and building cruise alliances with neighboring nations along with work on modernizing existing cruise ports, marinas, and destinations.
  - **Phase 2:** Aims to develop additional marinas, cruise terminals, and destinations to engage high-potential cruise circuits and sites.
  - **Phase 3:** Continues expanding cruise terminals, marinas, and destinations, while integrating all cruise circuits across the Indian Subcontinent to signify the ecosystem's maturity.

5th OCTOBER 2024

Chagos Island

- **Context:** The United Kingdom (UK) announced that an agreement has been reached to hand over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, ending decades of dispute and negotiation over Britain's last African colony.

About Chagos Archipelago

- The Chagos archipelago, comprising 58 islands, lies roughly 500 km to the south of the Maldives archipelago in the Indian Ocean.
- These islands were uninhabited until the late 18th century, when the French brought in slave labour from Africa and India to work in newly-established coconut plantations. In 1814, France ceded the islands to the British.

- In 1965, the UK constituted the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), of which the Chagos Islands were a central part. A few other BIOT islands were later ceded to the Seychelles in 1976 after it gained independence from Britain.
- Chagos was attached to Mauritius, another British colony in the Indian Ocean, for administrative purposes. But when Mauritius gained independence in 1968, Chagos remained with Britain.

Akashteer Systems

- **Context:** In response to escalating global security concerns, the Indian Army has significantly boosted its air defence capabilities by acquiring 100 Akashteer Air Defence Control and Reporting Systems (ADCRS).

Key Facts

- Developed by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).
- These systems will play a vital role in protecting India from aerial threats, including missile and rocket attacks.
- Akashteer integrates radars, sensors, and communication technologies to provide a real-time battlefield view, allowing the military to swiftly detect, track, and neutralize aerial threats.

National Mission on Edible Oils-Oilseeds (NMEO-Oilseeds)

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet approved the National Mission on Edible Oils-Oilseeds (NMEO-Oilseeds) to increase domestic oilseed production and achieve self-sufficiency in edible oils.

About NMEO-Oilseeds

- The initiative will span from 2024-25 to 2030-31 and will focus on enhancing the production of key primary oilseed crops such as Rapeseed-Mustard, Groundnut, Soybean, Sunflower, and Sesamum.
  - It will also focus on increasing collection and extraction efficiency from secondary sources like Cottonseed, Rice Bran, and Tree Borne Oils.

- **Aim:** To increase primary oilseed production from 39 million tonnes (2022-23) to 69.7 million tonnes by 2030-31, meeting around 72% of our projected domestic requirement.
- **Implementation:** By promoting adoption of high-yielding high oil content seed varieties, extending cultivation into rice fallow areas, and promoting intercropping.

Oil Seed Production in India

- India is the fourth largest oilseeds producer in the world, behind the USA, China, and Brazil. It has 20.8% of the total area under cultivation globally, accounting for 10% of global production.
- The largest oilseed-producing states in India include Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana.
- Over the past decades, per capita consumption of edible oil in the country has seen rise. This surge in demand has significantly outpaced domestic production, leading to a heavy reliance on imports to meet both domestic and industrial needs.
- In 2022-23, India imported 16.5 million tonnes (MT) of edible oils, with domestic production fulfilling only 40-45% of the country's requirements.

6ᵗʰ OCTOBER 2024

MIBOR

- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India released a report recommending changes in methodology of the Mumbai Interbank Outright Rate (MIBOR).

Key Facts

- The report proposes a change to a new benchmark referred to as the Secured Overnight Rupee Rate (SORR).
- This new rate is based on secured transactions in the money market, rather than unsecured interbank lending, providing more stability and reducing risks associated with it.

About Mumbai Interbank Outright Rate (MIBOR)

- It was introduced by the National Stock Exchange (NSE) in 1998 as a part of efforts to develop India's interbank money market.
- MIBOR is meant to capture the overnight borrowing rate between banks and helps in determining the cost of borrowing for financial institutions
- It serves as a benchmark for various financial instruments, such as floating rate bonds, interest rate swaps, and other debt instruments.
  - MIBOR plays a crucial role in determining the cost of capital for businesses and banks.

National Agriculture Code (NAC)

- **Context:** The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has begun the process of formulating a National Agriculture Code (NAC), on the lines of the existing National Building Code and National Electrical Code.

Key Facts

- **BIS:** It is the national body which sets standards for different products across various economic sectors.
  - In agriculture, it has already set standards for machinery (tractors, harvesters, etc.) and various inputs (fertilisers, pesticides, etc.)
  - However, there are still many areas not covered by the BIS standards.
- The NAC will cover the entire agriculture cycle, and will also contain a guidance note for future standardisation.
  - The code will have two parts. The first will contain general principles for all crops, and the second will deal with crop-specific standards for the likes of paddy, wheat, oilseeds, and pulses.
  - The NAC will serve as a guide for farmers, agriculture universities, and officials involved in the field.
  - In addition to standards for agriculture machinery, the NAC will cover all agriculture processes and post-harvest operations.

7th OCTOBER 2024

S-400 Air Defense Missile System

- **Context:** Indian Air Force Chief Marshal AP Singh said that India will receive the remaining two squadrons of the S-400 air defense missile system by 2025.

About S-400 system

- The S-400 Triumf is a surface-to-air missile system developed by Russia.
- It is considered one of the world's most advanced air defense systems

Key features:

- It can track and neutralize a wide range of airborne threats, including aircraft, missiles, and UAVs, across very long ranges and in dense countermeasure scenarios.
- The system is equipped with four types of missiles, offering interception ranges of 40 km, 120 km, 250 km, and 400 km, and it can engage threats up to 30 km altitude, creating a layered defense mechanism.
- Its 3D phased array radar can detect and track up to 300 targets at a distance of up to 600 km.
- The system is fully mobile and includes a command-and-control center, automatic tracking and targeting systems, launchers, and support vehicles.
- A standard S-400 battalion consists of eight missile launchers, each typically loaded with four missiles.

Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)

- **Context:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully conducted three flight tests of the 4th Generation Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) at the Pokhran Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.

About VSHORADS

- It is an indigenously developed Man-Portable Air Defence System (MANPAD).
- VSHORADS is a Man Portable Air Defence System developed by the Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories.
- It aimed at high-speed targets, demonstrated critical capabilities in maximum range and altitude interception.